

YOUTH IN TRANSITION:
A LONGITUDINAL STUDY
OF SCHOOL LEAVERS

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ABSTRACT

This study attempted to investigate the impact of unemployment on school-leavers. Two criteria of personal adjustment - work involvement and attribution of causality - were included in the research design to examine whether they intensified or mitigated the effects of unemployment on self-esteem. In order to differentiate between the causes and effects of unemployment, measures of students' attitudes on the dependent variables were taken prior to leaving school and again 4½ months later.

In addition, students' attitudes to work in general, promotion, wages and status were studied. The extent and nature of the preparation school leavers received at school for entry into the workforce and later perceptions of the help and advice received, were also examined.

The initial research objective of this thesis was not achieved as only a very small number of students were unemployed at the time of the follow-up investigation. The discussion of unemployment was, as a result, reduced to an analysis of interview and questionnaire responses. The findings highlighted the need to examine a complex combination of variables in understanding the individual's response and adaptation to unemployment.

Some differences and changes were observed for employed leavers, school returners, and tertiary students on the dependent measures and work attitudes studied.

It was shown that employed and unemployed leavers were later critical of some aspects of the help and advice they had received from school-based counselling.

The findings indicated that motivation to work was high, money was not a highly valued work outcome and the 'intrinsic' aspects of work were reflected throughout employed leavers' responses.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTIONA. Background.

The relationship between man and the world of work has for some time been a topic of much discussion, debate and research. It would be difficult to find writers and researchers who have not defined the work role as a critical one in our society or as a central life interest.

As Brown (1978) so aptly noted -

"What does he(she) do? remains the most illuminating question to ask someone met for the first time. It is illuminating question precisely because a man's or a woman's work or the fact that they do not need to or cannot work, is indicative of so much else about their social situation and likely life experiences."

(Brown, 1978 cited in Kelvin, 1981, pp 56-56)

The same view point is also stressed in the following statement -

"Work is the social act around which each of us organises much of his daily waking experience, and hopefully establishes a meaningful and rewarding life routine."

(Borow, 1964, pp xi)

In the writings expressing the central role of work in our society one sees that work not only provides man with a means to satisfy his or her most basic needs, but also serves to define a person's status, and has a major influence on shaping an individual's

self-concept. (Jahoda, 1979; 1981, Morse and Weiss, 1955; Tausky and Peidmont, 1968; Hayes and Nutman, 1981; Kabanoff, 1982; Abbott, 1982; Kasl, 1974).

In order to underline the importance of work, one needs merely to examine the lives of men and women who do not have work as a way of life. It has been variously reported as leading to a degree of dislocation and deprivation (Morse and Weiss, 1955). Other studies have shown demoralization and loss of self-respect as the most devastating impact (Jahoda, 1979).

Since the mid-1970's New Zealand, along with many other Western industrialized countries, has witnessed a marked increase in unemployment. While the causes and remedies are a matter of heated debate, one fact stands out, that in the future unemployment will become an almost inevitable experience for a growing number of people throughout their working lives.

However, there are several problems associated with prior research in this area. The first concerns omissions in coverage. It has been variously reported that school-leavers are disproportionately represented among the unemployed (Melvyn, 1977; Gidlow 1979; Hicks and Brosnan, 1982; Working Party Report, 1982).

While youth unemployment must be considered in context of unemployment in general, there are reasons to believe that youth unemployment is a problem which merits special attention.

The transition from school to work has traditionally been viewed as an important event in adolescent development. The significance of this transition is

noted by many. For example -

".... a school leaver's entry into employment involves more than choosing and finding a job - it represents the movement from one stage of the life cycle to another."

(Moor, 1976, p.30)

"This period is one of the vital points of the socialization process and, as such, a real understanding of the difficulties experienced is essential to anyone concerned with preparing youth for adult life."

(Hopson and Hayes, 1968, p.159)

Throughout the literature (Venables, 1968;

Maitland -Edwards, et al, 1981; Borrow, 1964, Pedder, 1980; Keil et al, 1966; Carter, 1966) similar view points to those expressed above represent an undisputed notion that entry into employment is a critical stage in adolescent development.

The rising rate of unemployment among the youthful population has meant that increasing numbers of school-leavers may not be able to make this transition smoothly. In a society which places a great deal of emphasis on the work role and regards unemployment as detrimental to the psychological well-being of individuals, one might expect that there would be a considerable body of literature dealing with the impact of unemployment on the school-leaver and its consequences for development. Unfortunately, this is not the case, and apart from a few isolated studies (Gurney, 1980; 1980a, 1981; Stafford, Jackson and Banks, 1980; Haines and Macky, 1981, Christchurch Employment Advisory Committee, 1979), the

impact of unemployment stands out as a relatively neglected area in the study of the 'transition from school to work' despite cogent arguments as to its importance (Jahoda, 1979; Working Party Report, 1981; Haines and Macky, 1981; Stafford et al, 1980).

Some studies make reference to the harmful effects on youth (Eizenburg and Lazarsfeld, 1938; Haines and Macky, 1982; Stafford et al, 1980; Christchurch Employment Advisory Committee, 1979) and there are the obvious fears that unemployment in the early years of working life may affect future motivation and impair the development of work habits (Haines and Macky, 1982, Labour and Employment Gazette, 1977). As yet the effects on youth are not well documented and it has not been demonstrated that the effects on youth are different or more severe than other groups of the population. Indeed, as Gurney (1980) points out, because youth has not experienced work in the occupational sense, the effects of being unable to secure work on leaving school may be less severe than on those who have an established occupational identity. On the other hand, the emotional stress and physical changes of adolescence may compound with unemployment to make it a particularly stressful experience.

Leaving aside the special problems of the young, it would be fair to comment that our knowledge of the impact of unemployment is disconcertingly sketchy.

Many of the studies date back to the 1930's and are characterized by such methodological deficiencies as qualitative, non-quantifiable data, the absence of control groups, and inexplicit designs for the measurement

of independent and dependent variables. While this information is undoubtedly useful, there is the obvious danger of generalizing the effects to the modern-day experience of the problem.

A number of these studies indirectly dealt with the process of unemployment and demonstrated that reactions to unemployment are not static. Several writers (for example, Hill, 1978; Hayes and Nutman, 1981; Harrison, 1976;) have since delineated four discernible stages in the subjective experience of unemployment: shock - optimism - pessimism - fatalism. The more empirically based studies have not provided unequivocal support for these phases and are apt to stress the differential reactions to unemployment (Gurney, 1980, 1981, Hepworth 1980; Hayes and Nutman, 1981) -

".... the unemployed are by no means homogeneous in their reactions to joblessness and it should not be assumed that every unemployed person passes through the same subjective experience." (Hepworth, 1980, p.145)

This realization has stimulated over the past two decades a continuing interest in examining the role of mediating factors in an endeavour to account for this variability.

Reactions to unemployment have been shown to vary according to: Social support (Gore, 1978; Swinburne, 1981; Hartley, 1980); socio-economic status (Goodschids and Smith, 1963; Hepworth, 1980, Marsden and Duff, 1975). The availability of 'work' role substitutes (Hepworth, 1980; Cohn, 1977); the centrality of work in an

individual's self-concept (Warr, 1978; Stafford et al, 1980). More recently intense interest has been shown in using concepts from attribution theory to investigate whether the perceived causes for unemployment in any way intensify or mitigate reactions to unemployment (Hesketh, 1981, 1982; Cohn, 1977; O'Brien and Kabanoff, 1979; Gurney, 1981; Haines and Macky, 1981; Swinburne, 1981).

While a number of important moderating influences have been identified, some of the findings are either contradictory or inconsistent with earlier findings. Many of the criticisms levelled at research in the 1930's are equally apparent today. The concentration on cross-sectional or correlational designs makes it difficult to differentiate between cause and effect. These problems compound and make it difficult to assess the psychological effects of unemployment with empirically based conviction.

Given the possibility of long-term unemployment, it is of paramount importance that research into unemployment is put on a sound footing, if we as psychologists are to assert that unemployment has important mental-health consequences and if we are to deal with the problem in a constructive way. It is equally apparent that there is a discrepancy between what is stated as being of importance and the actual research carried out. Despite many studies over the years examining the impact of unemployment on psychological well-being, there are few who have considered the effects on youth, despite the claim that

entry into employment is an important event in an individual's life.

B. The Present Study.

The present study was formulated with many of the aforementioned considerations in mind.

The primary focus of the present enquiry was to examine the impact of unemployment on the self-esteem of school-leavers. Two criteria of personal adjustment to unemployment were considered as moderating influences in the context of the present enquiry - that is, work-involvement, and the perceived causes for success and failure on the labour market.

In relation to the effects of unemployment on self-esteem, it was implied previously and is accepted here that one cannot assume the absence of pre-determining factors prior to employment or unemployment. It was for this reason that a measure of students' attitudes toward themselves, work and the causes for unemployment and employment was obtained prior to leaving school. As a result, any contiguity between the two periods would then be forthcoming.

Because of the exploratory nature of the enquiry and considering the paucity of research in the area both overseas and in the absence of similar enquiries in this country, no formal hypotheses were generated.

Secondary research areas covered in the thesis were:

- (1) Factors associated with the school-leavers' preparation to enter the work-force. Specific

factors considered were: the type and extent of help and advice received by students whilst still at school, which aspects were perceived to be of assistance in making the transition from school to work, or unemployment, and which groups of the school population were most likely to receive such information and advice.

(ii) An exploration of some aspects associated with school-leavers' motivation to work. Areas examined in this context were: the degree of work-involvement exhibited; the relative importance of wages, promotion and occupational status as work outcomes, reasons for job choice, what aspects of work were liked most and least, which factors would facilitate a decision to leave.

(iii) Conditions associated with school-leavers' work entry/unemployment - factors examined were: time taken to find employment, number of jobs applied for, use of outside support and employment agencies, factors that helped them to gain employment, level of satisfaction and degree of liking for current position, feelings that developed and were associated with unemployment, negative and positive aspects of joblessness,

the role of family and peer support, the use of leisure time.

The remainder of this thesis covers the following material. Chapter two contains a literature review of youth attitudes towards work, the role of school guidance and counselling in preparing young people for entry into employment, and the relationship between unemployment and self-esteem with emphasis on the role of moderating variables. Chapter three outlines the research design, the methodology and the sample is described. The results are presented in Chapters four to eight. Chapter four deals with the school-leavers' attitudes towards some aspects of work. Chapter five examines within and between group differences on the independent and dependent variables at both points in time and changes over time on the dependent measures. In Chapter six, the unemployment experience of a small number of school-leavers is presented. Chapter seven examines the early work experience of the employed leavers. The role of school guidance and counselling in preparing young people for entry into employment is discussed in Chapter eight.

The research report is completed with general conclusions, implications and directions for future research in Chapter nine.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature is divided into three broad sections. The first, considers the attitudes of youth towards work. Areas examined in this context were the relationships between job satisfaction and age, and work values with regard to age and employment status. Survey evidence regarding the attitudes of youth towards work is also examined. The second deals with the role of school guidance and counselling in preparing youth for entry into employment. The third section considers the relationship between employment and self-esteem with particular emphasis on the role of mediating factors - socio-economic status, social support, work involvement, causal attributions and locus of control.

A. The Changing Attitudes of Youth Towards Work: Fact or Fiction?

The changing attitudes of young people towards work has often been cited as an explanation for the recent difficulties youth are experiencing in the labour market. (Labour and Employment Gazette, 1977; Windshuttle, 1980; Employer Nos. 41, 1977; No.55, 1979; Colledge et al, 1978; Woolford and Law, 1980; Working Party Report into Unemployment, 1981).

Unfortunately, surprisingly little is known about the attitudes of young people towards work. As Gray and Roos (1975) so aptly noted -

"There is a tendency to think we know their (young people's) motives and behaviour patterns ('They just don't care anything about work anymore'), but little effort has been spent in obtaining specific data on their attitudes."

(Gray and Roos, 1975, p.41)

This concern is voiced by a number of employers, personnel managers and business executives and is evidenced in the widespread journalistic comments appearing in many publications. The following quotations are representative of those who claim that young people are less willing than previously to endorse the 'protestant work ethic' and the necessity to work. One employer remarked -

"Lack of enthusiasm: one detects a certain feeling that they are only half wanting the job: one also feels that with low retail wages they would prefer to be on the dole."

(Colledge et al, 1978, p.39)

"In the future young workers are not likely to want to dedicate all of their energies to their jobs."

(Employer, No.41, June, 1977, p.93)

According to an employer, youth today have developed the following characteristics -

"(a) Unreliability, lack of proper education, opposition to commitment, (b) deep-seated protest against

the need to work, job satisfaction, the need to make no contribution to the earning of an essential profit margin of his employer, (c) The employers, the Government, everybody owes him a living."

(Windshuttle, 1980, p.53)

Other employers voice concern over the declining educational standards of school-leavers.

"Many school-leavers (particularly, but not exclusively, those leaving at the statutory age) have not acquired a minimum acceptable standard in the fundamental skills involved in reading, writing, arithmetic, communications and the ability to think and act logically."

(Employer, 1979, p.1)

The same standpoint relating to the difficulties employers report in recruiting, motivating and maintaining young workers is emphasized in a large-scale survey of British employers. (Colledge et al, 1978). The most frequently mentioned differences that employers noted in youth today were a fall off in young people's willingness to work, unsatisfactory appearance and manners, a lack of basic educational skills and an inability to communicate effectively.

Certainly these views are not held by everybody, for example -

"The little evidence available suggests that a growing number of young people see the end product of transition (from school to work) as lying not so much in employment but in satisfying a richer form of personal and social life, with a more satisfactory

socialization into adult status ... Paid work is seen as one important means to achieve minimum of economic independence but it is frequently rejected if it does not offer any real scope for personal fulfillment and autonomy."

(Maitland-Edwards et al, 1981, p.930)

Pahl (1978) came to much the same conclusion upon analyzing school-leavers' essays in a futuristic account of their lives -

"Warmth in personal relationships was emphasised far more than the rewards of a consumer society."

(Pahl, 1978, p.262)

Some of the viewpoints expressed above regarding the calibre of young entrants into the workforce are obviously misconceptions about youth or are not substantiated by existing data. However, a lack of hard empirical evidence does little to prevent such groundless criticism.

Available psychological literature, while restricted in scope, suggests that there is a disparity between the sentiments expressed by youth and the variety of people who are critical of the attitudes and values that youth hold towards work, at least for some segments of the youthful population. While some differences are to be expected, it remains to be shown whether the attitudes of youth towards work are markedly different from those of older workers, or that they are any less motivated to work.

Four broad areas of research are relevant in this context -

- (i) Studies examining the relationship between age and job satisfaction.
- (ii) Survey evidence of youth attitudes to work.
- (iii) Research comparing the work attitudes and values among different age groups of the population.
- (iv) Studies examining the work orientation of employed and unemployed people.

(i) Job Satisfaction and Age:

Empirical research comparing different age groups of the population directly have concentrated on differences in job satisfaction. The general conclusion from a number of studies (Hulin and Blood, 1968; Carrell and Elbert, 1974; Wild, 1970; Gibson and Klien, 1970, Altimus and Tersine, 1973; Gray and Roos, 1975), is that a positive linear relationship exists between age and job satisfaction, that is, job satisfaction increases with age.

However, it is difficult to sustain a simple straightforward causal relationship between age and job satisfaction, due to a host of possible moderating influences, and intervening variables. Several writers and researchers (Taylor and Thompson, 1976; Blood, 1969; Wollack et al, 1971; Gray and Roos, 1975) have drawn attention to the possible confounding effects of education, wage differentials, seniority, tenure, job level, job characteristics and motivation.

Few studies to date have considered these factors simultaneously to investigate their role in the

relationship between age and job satisfaction. Variation in job satisfaction, or part thereof may well be better explained by a combination of these factors.

Thus, while the literature at face value supports a positive linear relationship between age and job satisfaction, this conclusion should not be accepted unequivocally. While it is undoubtedly important to know that individuals differ on components of job satisfaction, it is equally important to study why these differences exist, given that a particular group is less satisfied. Some evidence pertaining to this question will be presented in the following section.

(ii) Survey Evidence Regarding Youth Attitudes to Work:

The importance of money to members of the workforce has been a topic of persistent controversy. Many economists and employers are apt to stress the importance of money to workers. The limitations of this economic view of man becomes obvious upon reading any of the psychological, sociological or anthropological discussions of work, where the emphasis is on rewards that go beyond a concern for remuneration and better working conditions. Those challenging this somewhat limited view of man stress the "need-satisfying potentialities" of work and the job. There is a growing body of literature concerned with the 'quality of working life', the various organization strategies employed to enlarge and enrich jobs and

the increasing number of organizations experimenting with participation in decision-making.

Several studies of adolescents and young workers have demonstrated that the appeal of a job is more than just purely economic gains.

Yankelovich (1974) in a study of non-college youth found that for 66%, 'interesting' work was the highest ranked job criterion, 15% above job security. Furthermore, when asked to rank thirtyfive job criteria, money was placed in the bottom ten, and during the period 1969 to 1973 non-college youth desired less emphasis on money.

Connell et al (1975) concluded that remuneration was not the main concern of adolescents in this study. A striking feature of this research was the importance placed on the character of the work; which featured prominently in adolescents' reasons for occupational choice and their evaluations of what was most liked about work.

TABLE 1
Reason for Job Choice

	<u>% Males</u>	<u>% Females</u>
Nature of the work	38	36
Arranged by someone else	8	9
Filling in while waiting for) something else)	7	9
Good money	8	6
Good conditions	7	7
Drifted into it	5	4
Forced into it	2	4
People	9	8
Security	9	8
Other	9	8

Connell et al (1975), Table 9:14 p.236

TABLE 2
What is Most Liked about Work?

	<u>% Males</u>	<u>% Females</u>
The work itself	36	31
The people	15	37
Conditions/security	26	16
Fulfilling old aspirations	3	3
Nothing	4	3
Just a job	3	4
Other	2	1

Connell et al (1975) Table 9:15 p.237

Colledge et al (1978) found job satisfaction was the most important job criterion, followed by interpersonal relationships and money. In this study "interesting work" was mentioned relatively infrequently in comparison. For unemployed people who had never worked "interesting work" was a more important job criterion than for the employed sample and those who had worked before becoming unemployed.

The early school-leavers in Moor's (1976) survey were asked to rank order a list of job criteria. The opportunity to learn a skill or gain a qualification was by far the most important aspect of a job, wages and co-workers assumed a lower priority, and there was very little agreement on the importance of other job characteristics (interesting work, variety, responsibility, and promotion), none of which were cited as the most important of all by more than three boys. These boys then, mainly from lower class backgrounds, were not leaving school early simply to earn money and have more freedom, but also because they were unable to

acquire the skills directly useful to them in a job by remaining in conventional post-primary compulsory education.

The author noted that the emphasis the boys placed on learning a skill stemmed from family job preferences centering around 'a trade' for reasons concerned mainly with prospects, wages and security. The boys did not share parents' views on importance of security but did however put high priority on wages and prospects.

(iii) Age and Work Values:

Studies directly examining the relationship between age and work values, while limited, have on the whole confirmed the changing emphasis towards the 'intrinsic' aspects of work. That is not to say that money is unimportant, for it has been shown to be, but that economic security alone is no longer incentive enough to work.

Taylor and Thompson (1976) reported that younger workers valued the opportunity to learn, desired autonomy in the workplace and personally rewarding work tasks to a greater extent than older workers. Paradoxically, they found that the importance of money as a work outcome declined with age. A finding supported by Cherrington et al (1979, 1977) and confirming the conclusion of Yankelovich (1974) that while there is no evidence to indicate that young workers are willing to sacrifice economic gains for self-fulfilment, the change that appears to be

occurring is a change in emphasis on rewards that go beyond a concern for remuneration and working conditions. The survey results of Cherrington et al (1977, 1979) support this conclusion, these authors found that the discrepancy between how enriched their present jobs were and how enriched they would like them to be was particularly large for younger workers, which went some way towards explaining why younger workers were more dissatisfied with their jobs. Cherrington et al (1977, 1979) also noted that younger workers did not believe that hard work and pride in craftsmanship are as important as older workers believe them to be, and younger workers believe that welfare was more acceptable than what older workers do. Cherrington's findings coincide with those of Susman (1973), who found that older workers reported greater pride in job accomplishment than younger employees and Aldag and Brief (1975) who reported a low but significant correlation ($r = .305$) between age and the pro-protestant ethic scale of Blood (1969).

The extent to which a person expresses a desire to be engaged in work and the degree to which work is an integral part of the self-concept, has also been considered recently in the context of age.

Warr et al (1979) in two studies of male manual workers, report mean scores of 31.77 and 33.77 on the 'work involvement' scale out of a possible of 42. Stafford et al (1980) in a study of employed and unemployed school-leavers reported a mean score of 27.79 for the employed school-leavers and 25.56 for

those school-leavers unemployed, out of a possible total of 30. The latter authors, while cognizant of the problems in comparing the two studies, due to differences in the wording of items and the scales, concluded that on face validity grounds the sample of young people surveyed seemed to report a stronger desire to work than older workers.

Albiet tentative, this finding does not support the belief among employers that young people are less willing to work. It conflicts, however, with the finding of Cherrington et al (1977, 1979) that young workers were less work orientated than older workers on a number of items relating to the work ethic. It also is at odds with the findings of Gray and Roos (1975) who reported that younger workers compared to older workers were less apt to say that "the most important things that happen to them involve work", and more likely to say that "most things in their lives were more important than work".

These writers also reported that younger workers tended to state that their major satisfaction in life was their leisure and friendship activities rather than work. This could be a response to a job that did not utilize their skills and abilities, rather than a measure of involvement itself. Partial support for this conclusion can be found in the finding that as levels of education increased there was a decline in the extent to which individuals utilized a wide range of skills and abilities in their jobs.

Gray and Roos concluded -

"Assuming that the types of jobs blue collar workers perform do not differ significantly from those of several years ago, it is not surprising that today's educated worker is less satisfied than the older, relatively less educated worker."

(Gray and Roos, 1975, p.54)

(iv) The Work Orientations of Unemployed and Employed Workers:

Because it has been claimed that some young people are out of work because of their work attitudes and motivation, studies comparing them to their employed counterparts are also relevant.

Lavercombe and Fleming (1981) attempted to predict the duration of unemployment experienced immediately after leaving school on the basis of attitudes held by pupils while still at school. No significant relationships were found between the duration of unemployment experienced by pupils immediately after school on attitude scales relating to attitudes to work, unemployment, school and authority.

These authors posit that attitudes are likely to be only one of several influences on the duration of unemployment. A school-leaver's effectiveness in looking for jobs, the information and skills brought to the job hunt and contacts, are all factors that may have accounted for an inability to predict those people at risk of longer periods of unemployment by the use of attitude scales alone.

O'Brien and Kabanoff (1979) examined the differences between unemployed and employed workers on a variety of measures including the relative importance of intrinsic and extrinsic job attributes, work values, and job involvement. Young unemployed in comparison to older unemployed desired more interaction and less pressure in a job. Young unemployed workers also displayed less "involvement" than older workers.

While the study did not examine age differences between those unemployed and those employed, the unemployed reported less desire for autonomy, interaction and pressure in their work and displayed lower job-involvement scores than employed workers, which supports the finding of Stafford et al (1980) that the unemployed school-leavers surveyed had lower work involvement scores compared with employed school-leavers.

It is a commonplace belief that the unemployed are in a position of being without work because they do not put much effort into looking for work. Limited evidence (Haines and Macky, 1981) suggests that the unemployed try hard to find jobs. Thirty percent had applied for more than thirty jobs since leaving school compared with 4.5% of those employed. This certainly does not support the contention that the unemployed do not want to work, for clearly a great deal of effort has been put into finding a job. In a similar vein the Christchurch survey of Unemployed Youth (1979) noted that the majority, 121 (90.3%), would like to obtain a job and there was a high interest expressed in the opportunity to learn specific job

skills, even though there was no guarantee of a job following a course.

Much of the research on unemployment is cross-sectional in nature, with the consequential inability to draw causal inferences. It may be that differences found in motivation and work attitudes are a consequence of being out of work, rather than explicable in terms of existing differences 'prior' to unemployment. Such a lack of systematic longitudinal evidence precludes any conclusions on this point and must await the outcome of future research.

B. School Counselling and Guidance.

The emergence and development of an 'extensive' careers education and guidance service within schools, is, in part, a response to a recognition that young people need to learn about the world of work before they enter full-time employment and the roles they will play as adults. If young people enter the workforce inadequately informed and ill-prepared about job requirements, working conditions, learning and training opportunities and the range of fields open to them, many may find themselves in a frustrating situation because they find the nature of the work is such that it does not utilize their skills and abilities to the full extent, may lack training opportunities, advancement prospects and creative outlets.

An employer expressed this viewpoint well when he/she noted -

"The opportunity to secure an appropriate job and to advance a career commensurate with one's abilities is heavily dependent upon the early acquisition of pre-vocational skills, knowledge and attitudes which orientate the young towards the competitive and real world of work."

(Employer, No.57, 1979, p.4-5)

Ensuring that young people are better informed about the world of work and helping them to find work that is interesting and personally satisfying should help ease the transition. It must be admitted however that vocational guidance and careers education is not a universal panacea and cannot help solve some of the deeper problems arising from the workplace and the range of experiences school-leavers are likely to encounter upon entry into employment. It cannot, for example, change the nature of a boring or repetitive job, or solve the problems associated with technological changes and the rising levels of unemployment. It can, however, help students to make more informed and realistic choices and enable them to compete alongside other workers for employment.

Despite recent efforts to ease the transition for many school-leavers, much of the evidence available suggests that employers and many school-leavers themselves are critical of the extent to which school prepared them for entry into employment.

One employer remarked -

"It would be fair to say that employers find that

school-leavers are on the whole insufficiently prepared for the transition into adult life and they lack a realistic appreciation of the opportunities open to them in employment or further education."

(Employer, No.57, 1979, p.4)

Two-thirds of the employers in Colledge et al's (1978) survey felt that young people were not well briefed about the job, the firm, how to behave in an interview, and wanted young people to be given more information about work and the meaning of "earning a living".

Other writers draw attention to a possible bias in guidance and careers education.

"Guidance and counselling services tend to cater for and be used by examination successes, not the examination failures, and it is these 'failures' who may have the most problems in making the transition from school to work."

(Labour and Employment Gazette, 1976)

Many secondary schools in an endeavour to meet the challenge of the changing realities of full-time employment have instituted a variety of bridging schemes - work exploration programmes, transition to work classes, work experience and pre-employment courses.

A number of these cater precisely for those pupils who are less academically orientated, or those who have unsuccessfully tried to find employment and return to school in an effort to compete more freely on the labour market. A lack of evaluative research in this area prevents any conclusion regarding the success of these programmes. There is some survey evidence to suggest that school-leavers are generally critical of the extent to

which school prepared them for their eventual entry into employment and choice of occupation.

In a study of unemployed youth in Christchurch,⁽¹⁾ 71% (94) felt that school had not prepared them adequately for looking for and finding a job. Only 10% (13) felt that school-based counselling had given them an insight into coping with unemployment. The majority 111 (83%) did not feel that school prepared them for being in a position of being without work.

McEwan (1972) came to much the same conclusion in a retrospective study of employed trainee technicians and apprentices.

TABLE 3

Do you feel there is enough help given at school for young people these days to find the work they want?

	<u>Technicians</u>	<u>Apprentices</u>
Yes	19.08	30.99
No	63.36	49.30
Uncertain	17.56	19.75

Table: 22 p.81 (McEwan, 1972)

Again the majority of school-leavers in this sample found the help available at schools to find the work they wanted, was unsatisfactory. McEwan and Tuck (1973) conclude on this point -

"The extent to which schools should be involved in vocational guidance is debatable, but the majority of school-leavers in this sample expected it to do more." (p.18)

Moreover, the findings of the Christchurch Employment Advisory Committee⁽¹⁾ suggest that very little has been done hitherto to prepare young people to cope with

(1) Christchurch Employment Advisory Committee (1979)

a general uncertainty about traditional stable employment.

Similar findings and conclusions have been reached overseas. Though somewhat dated, Powell and Bloom (1962) in their study found that 46.6% of males and 52.2% of females had received some vocational guidance, mainly from school-based counselling. In an evaluation of the counselling received, 45.7% stated that it was a positive help, 12.5% reported that the counselling was of little help and 40.2% stated that the counselling had not aided them in their choice of vocation. More recently Colledge et al (1978) reported that 50% of those employed and 37% of those entering higher education had received advice from a school-based careers officer. The majority said they found the advice useful at the time, however fewer unemployed people thought the advice was useful upon leaving school (56% compared to 70%). Maizels (1970) found that as many as 33% of the boys studied (N=183) seemed to have learnt little or nothing in comparison with what they felt they needed to know about the work they intended to do, and less than 33% felt that most of the information required had been obtained.

Another general conclusion that can be reached by reading the literature is that parents and friends are as much a source of information and advice regarding careers as schools are.

McEwan (1972) found among the adolescents studied that the majority of technician and apprentice groups felt that they had either made up their own minds, with

a sizeable majority citing their parents as chief sources of information. There was a slight tendency for the technician trainees to report school-related sources of help (careers advisers or vocational guidance officers) but on the whole school-based counselling was mentioned relatively infrequently.

TABLE 4

When you were deciding and thinking about what work to do, who helped you most to make up your mind?

	<u>Technician Trainees</u>	<u>Trade Apprentices</u>
Parents	32.06	26.06
Careers Adviser or Counsellor	8.40	3.52
Teachers	6.87	6.34
Vocational Guidance Officer	15.27	4.23
Friends	7.63	4.93
Self	52.67	64.08
Other (i) Relatives	1.53	2.11
(ii) "Boss"	0.0	1.41

McEwan (1972), Table 21, p.80

The same standpoint is emphasized throughout the available literature (Cameron and Livingstone, 1979; Colledge et al, 1978; Maizels, 1970; Carter, 1966; Veness, 1962). Parents were as much a source of job advice as were careers teachers and officers in Colledge et al's (1978) survey, and Moor (1976) reported that 50% of boys surveyed cited fathers as being more helpful than anyone else as a source of help and advice about employment. Careers officers were named as the most helpful source of advice by just under a

quarter of all school-leavers surveyed. The pre-eminence of parents was linked with the boys' recruitment network. The majority of school-leavers who had obtained a job had done so as a direct result of help from parents and friends.

It has become increasingly obvious that career planning and vocational education is a developmental process rather than an arbitrary one beginning at some certain age or school year (Borow, 1964; Warters, 1956; Working Party Report, 1971). Various schemes have been organized through the Department of Labour, in co-operation with polytechnics and schools to help cater for young unemployed, most of whom have left school without a job or who have subsequently become unemployed. The findings reported offer continuing but limited support for the notion that pre-vocational and personal development skills make entry into employment a smoother process.

A pre-employment course designed for unemployed school-leavers was carried out under the auspices of the Department of Labour and Whangarei Polytechnic. The organizer concluded that a definite change occurred in the attitude, appearance and personality of participants.

"From being disinterested and at times obstructive in their attitude, most became keen and helpful by the end of the course. From taking little or no care in their appearance, most developed a sense of pride in their grooming and dress From being shy and embarrassed, many gained poise and confidence." (Mike Gifford, 1977, p.42)

Most subsequently gained employment, and many of the girls consistently commented that they had gained self-confidence in themselves and their abilities.

A similar conclusion was reached from a pre-employment course in New Plymouth. By the end of the course between 30% and 70% had secured jobs and the girls appeared to have gained self-confidence and awareness. Wicks (1979) concluded on the success of the course -

"First, they have made constructive use of their time; secondly, they have put the girls in touch with more employment opportunities; and, lastly, the students have become more aware of themselves as potential employees and members of the community at large."

(Wicks, 1979, p.85)

In a pre-employment course at Nga Tapu College in which some of the participants were fifth form students and unemployed school-leavers, the course organizer claimed that the course helped those involved to increase self-esteem and self-confidence and many of those participating in the course were subsequently employed (Devliant, 1979).

C. The Psychological Effects of Unemployment.

Existing psychological and sociological literature on unemployment is relatively scarce, although interest is increasing. Many of the relevant unemployment studies date from the late 1930's and early 1940's and

are characterized by such methodological shortcomings as - subjective and non-quantifiable data, absence of control groups, and a failure to use optimal designs (prospective-longitudinal). In addition, the role of other pertinent variables is seldom examined systematically. The limitations of our knowledge have been recognized by many researchers in the area, (Brotherton, Morley-Bunker, 1980; Jahoda, 1979; Gurney, 1980, 1981, 1981a; Windshuttle, 1980) but as yet the deficiencies have not been rectified.

(i) Unemployment and Self-esteem:

One of the most commonly held and commonsense beliefs about the psychological impact of unemployment is that it has a deleterious effect on self-esteem. On the descriptive level, there has been a number of reports of loss of self-esteem. Eizenburg and Lazarsfeld (1938) in an extensive review of the literature in the 1930's noted that -

".... the individual's prestige is lost in his own eyes and as he imagines in the eyes of his fellowmen. He develops feelings of inferiority, loses self-confidence, and in general, loses his morale." (p.359)

The belief that unemployment leads to a marked decline in self-esteem is equally apparent today and has been variously reported by a number of people.

".... a significant number of people who, through no fault of their own are stripped of self-esteem, self-determination and optimism." (Max Abbott, New Zealand Listener, June 27, 1981, p.23)

"When you are turned down for interview after interview, you may easily begin to loose your self-confidence."

(Holmes, 1981, p.8)

The more empirically based studies do not support unequivocally the notion of loss of self-esteem. Rather they focus on a range of factors likely to mediate its impact.

In a longitudinal study of school-leavers, an apparently contrary position regarding the effect of unemployment on self-esteem is offered by Gurney (1980), who found that there was no significant change in self-esteem for those school-leavers who were unable to find work. Rather, it was the employed females who experienced a significant increment in self-esteem. Gurney (1980) concluded that the absence of a similar increase in self-esteem for the unemployed may have been offset by the disappointment of being unable to find work and suggested that factors intrinsic to leaving school and finding work may be responsible.

The results of this study stress the developmental role of work, and rather than unemployment leading to regression, it may create a moratorium in development (Gurney, 1980, 1980a).

The authors also noted that their measure of self-esteem may not have been sensitive to components of self-esteem most effected by unemployment.

Hartley (1980) came to much the same conclusion in a study of unemployed managers. For some managers self-esteem was lowered during unemployment, indicated

by "a lack of self-confidence, self-deprecatory remarks, low morale, frequent depression, low energy and a pessimistic outlook", others appeared to maintain their level of self-esteem while they were unemployed, though it may fluctuate. A reduced feeling of self-worth may be triggered by a specific event, such as a job rejection or a family quarrel. These data suggest that a wider range of levels of self-esteem exist than previously reported.

The findings of Hartley (1980) are at odds with those of Kaufman (1973) who reported that unemployed professionals had significantly lower self-assurance scores than under-employed, re-employed and employed professionals.

(ii) Mediating Factors:

(a) Socio-economic Status -

Goodchilds and Smith (1963) found that social status was an important factor when considering the relationship between unemployment and its effect on self-evaluations. Among those of a higher occupational status, scores on 'self-confidence' and other indices of self-esteem decreased the longer the period out of work. For the lower occupational levels, the reverse relationship was the case.

Hepworth (1980) came to much the same conclusion in a cross-sectional study of different occupational groups. Hepworth (1980) reported that semi-skilled and unskilled men had significantly lower life satisfaction scores and poorer mental health than managerial or white collar

workers. It has been suggested that the ability of these broad occupational groups to fill in their time meaningfully may be partially responsible (Swinburne, 1981; Hepworth, 1980). Indeed, Hepworth (1980) found that people's ability to fill in their time meaningfully decreased with the lower occupational status groups and it also correlated with time out of work. That is, the ability of the unemployed sample to utilize their time meaningfully decreased as the time out of work increased.

(b) Social Support -

Social support has also been found to be an important intervening variable (Gore, 1978; Swinburne, 1981). Swinburne (1981) reported that in some cases a supportive and understanding family helped to reduce the negative affect associated with being unemployed.

Hartley (1980) reported that periodically low self-esteem in managers may be triggered by specific events, one of which was tense family relations.

In a similar vein, Gore (1978) found that significantly more unsupported blue-collar workers evidenced self-blame and reported a higher sense of economic deprivation than did supported men in similar circumstances.

(c) Work Involvement -

Another neglected, though important factor, is the importance of work in a person's self-concept, that is, 'work involvement'. Warr (1978) reported that although the unemployed in his study reported a significantly lower positive affect and a higher negative affect, this

relationship was only significant for those who had high 'work orientation scores'. Cohn (1978) also found that the importance of employment status in an individual's self-concept determined whether unemployment led to self-dissatisfaction, as indicated by the greater dissatisfaction of those without alternative roles in which to define their self-concept. A similar relationship was found in a study of under-qualified school-leavers (Stafford et al, 1980). These writers found that work involvement moderated the relationship between employment status and mental health. For the employed, high work involvement scores were associated with good mental health, whereas for the unemployed the reverse relationship was the case, that is, high work involvement was associated with poor mental health.

(d) Causal Attributions and Locus of Control -

The explanations that those who are out of work give for their situation may also help to account for some of the variability in reactions to unemployment. That is, whether or not an individual experiences a decrease in self-esteem may be a function of whether this change is perceived as internally or externally orientated. Cohn (1978) postulated -

"We would expect that if an external locus is available to the individual in his attribution of cause for unemployment, the individual's self-concept is less likely to be negatively affected by his unemployment."

(p.90)

Although this contention is consistent with the theoretical model, it is at odds with the general findings of studies in the great depression. It could be expected that, because many people were out of work in the 1930's due to the prevailing economic conditions, that there would be little change in their attitudes towards themselves. That is, because an external locus of control was available. Apparently this was not the case, and many supplied internal reasons for their predicament, for example -

"The apparently obvious fact that in the depression, unemployment was not the fault of the individual became less and less obvious to those who looked for work without success, irrational self-doubt and depressive moods soon took over."

(Jahoda, 1979, p.309)

There is limited evidence to support the notion that the availability of an external locus of control lessens the deprecatory effects that unemployment has on self-esteem. Swinburne (1981) found that for some managers the contemporary high levels of unemployment helped to mitigate their reaction to unemployment. Cohn (1978) found that for those living in areas where the local unemployment rate was low there was a greater negative effect on their self-evaluations compared with those who lived in areas of high unemployment.

Locus of control, a closely related concept, has also been discussed in relation to unemployment. O'Brien and Kabanoff (1979) reported that the unemployed in comparison with the employed sample exhibited more external

orientation with regard to life outcomes. In a survey of young unemployed youth in Christchurch, respondents were asked, whom (or what) they saw as being responsible for their continuing unemployment, set out in the Table below -

TABLE 5
Responsibility for Respondent's Unemployment

Myself	42
Government/Prime Minister	40
No-one, just the times	22
Economic system	12
Employers	5
Older people	3
Schools	3
Labour Department	2
Married women	2

Table 10, p.24, New Zealand Christchurch
Employment Advisory Committee, 1979

While it is not possible to relate this to self-esteem, it shows that the majority of young people surveyed favoured an external explanation for their unemployment. Some did however blame their own apathy and motivation (N=42).

Haines and Macky (1981) matched paired fifteen unemployed and fifteen employed school-leavers. Results from administering Rotter's internal-external locus of control scale to both groups showed small but insignificant differences between groups. When both groups were asked who they thought was most responsible for their having or not having a job, both groups equally attributed responsibility to themselves. The

unemployed who did not blame themselves for their predicament tended to blame the Government or society, whereas the employed did not perceive the Government or society as being largely responsible for their success in finding a job. In view of the limited sample, it is difficult to draw any definitive conclusions on the basis of this study.

An apparently contrary position emerged in a well-controlled study of school-leavers in Australia (Gurney, 1981). In a cross-sectional study there was apparent support for the contention that the unemployed were more likely to have a greater preference for external explanations than their employed peers. However, results from a longitudinal study indicated that the unemployed did not change their style of causal ascription over a period of four and a half months after leaving school. Rather, it was the employed school-leavers who were found to become significantly more internal in the causal ascriptions. Furthermore, their attributions prior to leaving school were not predictive of employment status upon leaving school.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter it is proposed to set out in detail the procedures considered and adopted for the present enquiry. The sample will be described, as will the choice of research instruments, procedures for the pilot and major surveys.

A. General Purpose and Design

Whereas many previous studies examining the impact of unemployment on self-esteem have used cross-sectional or correlational designs with a consequential inability to draw causal inferences from the results, the present study obtained a measure of school leavers' self-esteem, work involvement and perceived causes for unemployment and employment prior to leaving school, and again approximately four and a half months later.

The design is similar to that described by Tuckman (1978) as the non-equivalent control group design in all respects except for two aspects. For obvious reasons there was no random assignment of subjects to employment status after leaving school, and secondly, the researcher had no control over the amount or kind of unemployment or employment experienced.

Thus while the emphasis was on school-leavers'

subsequent employment status, data were gathered on the dependent variables prior to leaving school. By using a pre-test it would be possible to establish the initial equivalence of the students who later made up the groups on the dependent variables and thereby possible to ascertain whether the changes that occurred were a result of the transitional experience or explicable in terms of differences existing prior to leaving school.

In addition to the attitude measures examining the main variables under study, individual items relating to respondents' background characteristics (family and work history), the type and extent of preparation received at school and attitudes to work and unemployment were also included in the study in an attempt to qualify, elaborate on, and provide alternative explanations for any conclusions that might have been forthcoming.

B. The Research Instruments

(i) Questionnaire Versus Interview:

The choice of the questionnaire in preference to the interview as the major means of data collection for the main enquiry was based on several considerations.

- (a) The questionnaire is less costly and time consuming. Because only one interviewer would have been available, data collection would have

taken an unacceptable length of time.

- (b) Because there was no way of ascertaining respondents' employment status prior to leaving school, a very large pool of respondents was required. The questionnaire allowed for a greater number of respondents to be used, and again this would not have been feasible with interviews.
- (c) Practically, it would not have been possible to organize interviewing on such a large scale without major disruptions to the schools' organization.

Two foreseeable problems associated with the questionnaire appeared relevant in the context of the present enquiry, the first pertaining only to the follow-up questionnaire.

- (a) Indisputably, the major weakness of a mailed questionnaire is the problem of non-returns, which introduces bias insofar as the returns may not be representative of the original sample drawn.
- (b) The validity of questionnaire data depends in a crucial way on the willingness of the respondent to provide the information requested and to be honest and sincere in their responses to questions. A researcher has little or no control over such bias and no way of knowing in how many cases it has occurred.

Attempts to overcome these potential disadvantages will be considered in a later section.

(ii) Scales for the Measurement
of the Dependent Variables: (1)

In addition to the individual items examining attitudes to guidance and counselling services, work and unemployment a decision was necessary as to what to use as measures of self-esteem, self-attributions and work involvement.

(a) Work Involvement -

The decision to use the work involvement scale developed by Warr et al (1979) and adapted by Stafford et al (1980) was based on a review of several alternatives. The majority of studies on 'involvement' have used the scale or part thereof developed by Lodahl and Kejner (1965). The scale has been subject to a great deal of criticism since its introduction and was not utilized in the present enquiry for the following reasons -

- (i) The focus of the Lodahl and Kejner items is mainly in terms of a person's present job, indeed they use the term 'job involvement', whereas the present study was concerned with an individual's orientation to work in general.

(1) Copies of the scales and questionnaire can be found in Appendices B, C and D.

(ii) Lodahl and Kejner use the term 'job' and 'work' interchangeably with some consequential confusion. Recent empirical investigations have supported the contention that a person can be work involved but may not necessarily exhibit job involvement (Jans, 1982; Gorn and Kanungo, 1980; Kanungo, 1982; Saleh and Hosek, 1976).

(iii) Finally, many of the items in the Lodahl and Kejner scale reflect levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction rather than measuring psychological identification with work directly. While 'involvement' has been conceived as both a cause and effect of job behaviour (Rabinowitz and Hall, 1977; Gorn and Kanungo, 1980; Kanungo, 1982; Lawler and Hall, 1970) it is important for conceptual clarity and effective methodology that the state of 'involvement' is measured separately from both its causes and effects.

The decision to utilize the scale developed by Warr et al (1979) was made with many of the above-mentioned considerations in mind.

(i) Firstly, it was in accord with the definition of 'work involvement' adopted for the present study.

(ii) Secondly, the items appeared to exhibit face validity, in that they were concerned with an individual's identification with work rather than

the affective states associated with involvement or non-involvement in a particular job.

- (iii) Warr et al (1979) report alpha coefficients, a measure of internal consistency, of .63 and .64 in two separate studies. In a slightly modified version of the scale Stafford, Jackson and Banks (1980) reported an alpha coefficient of .71, mean item-whole correlations were .83 and .48 across the two studies and the latter authors report that the mean item-whole correlation was .46 with a range from .36 to .57. For such a short scale these coefficients are acceptably high. In a factor analysis, all items in the work involvement scale loaded on a separate factor, although there was some overlap between work involvement and intrinsic motivation. This can be expected given that the two have been shown to be empirically related (Lawler and Hall, 1970; Gorn and Kanungo, 1980). The factor structure was consistent across the two samples, suggesting the scale's generality.

It is difficult to compare the psychometric properties of this scale with other available scales mainly due to the multi-dimensional nature of many previously developed scales.

(b) Self-esteem -

It is an unfortunate fact that although many measures of self-esteem have been generated in recent years, no generally accepted measure of

self-esteem is presently available (Crandall, 1973; Wells and Marwell, 1976).

Self-esteem was measured in the present enquiry by means of a twentyfour item 'general self' inventory developed by Coopersmith (1967). The Coopersmith scale was developed from a concept of self-esteem as a *"personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in attitudes an individual holds toward himself"* (Coopersmith, 1967, p.55). In relation to this view of self-esteem Coopersmith proposed four major components of self-esteem -

1. School
2. Family
3. Peers
4. Personal interests

Originally designed for the younger age groups, the form used in the present enquiry has been used by all age groups (Crandall, 1973).

The decision to use the Coopersmith inventory was based on several considerations.

- (i) In an extensive review of existing scales designed to measure self-esteem, the Coopersmith inventory is reported by Crandall (1973) to be among the top eight scales suggested by the author to represent the best of the scales then available to measure self-esteem.

- (ii) It would prove less time-consuming to administer than the more commercially-based Tennessee self-concept scale (Fitts, 1964) which takes twenty minutes to administer compared with ten minutes for the Coopersmith inventory. This was an important consideration given that the entire questionnaire had to be administered in less than an hour.
- (iii) Gurney (1980) in a study similar to the present enquiry suggested that the Rosenberg scale (1965) may not have been sensitive to evaluations of the self most likely to be affected by unemployment. Indeed it specifically measures the self-acceptance aspect of self-esteem (Rosenburg, 1965). The Coopersmith inventory offered considerable flexibility in the handling of data, in that it had the potential to measure discrete sub-areas of self-esteem (such as peer, family, self, school), all of which could be possibly affected by an individual's position in the occupational world.
- (iv) While the reader may question particular items, there is no doubt that the items reflect the liking and respect an individual has toward himself derived from different components of his/her self-image.

- (v) With regard to the psychometric properties of the scale, Taylor and Reitz (1968), cited in Crandall (1973), found a split-half reliability coefficient of .90. No corresponding data are available for the short form. Coopersmith (1967) reports a test-repeat reliability coefficient for the original scale of .88 over five weeks and .70 over three years.

Crandall (1973) reports that the scale appears to be multidimensional. In two samples of college students (N=200 and 300) factor analyses of the scale revealed four factors labelled as: family- parents, self-derogation, leadership- popularity, and assertiveness-anxiety. In the same study correlations of .56 and .60 were reported between the form used in the present enquiry and the Rosenberg scale (1965) which was developed from a similar perspective. Correlations between the Coopersmith and other measures of self-esteem are reported to range between .42 and .66 (Crandall, 1973).

Looking at a variety of retrospective family and school information, Coopersmith (1967) concluded that three conditions appear to be conducive to high self-esteem -

- (a) Acceptance of children by parents.
- (b) Setting clearly defined limits for the children by the parents.

- (c) Respect for individual initiative and
 latitude within these limits by parents.

While there is less validity than the reader may think necessary this is not a problem peculiar to the Coopersmith inventory but the central problem in self-esteem scales in general. Given the relative primitive state of the art these limitations had to be accepted.

Perhaps the most foreseeable weakness of the scale is the high correlations reported with social desirability (Wells and Maxwell, 1976; Crandall, 1973). Again this is not a problem unique to the Coopersmith scale. By changing the forced choice format to a Likert response code it was felt that this problem would be lessened.

(c) Causal Attributions -

Only one inventory specifically designed to measure the attributions people make about the causes for unemployment and employment was available for consideration at the time of the present study, that developed by Gurney (1981). The scale was developed and based on a proposition that the ability or inability to get work is perceived by individuals as a function of factors internal or external to them.

Because research into the types of attributions the unemployed and employed make is such a recent topic of psychological investigation into unemployment, considerations regarding the appropriateness of the Gurney scale for the present study were based on face validity and practical grounds rather than the psychometric properties of the scale. Four main considerations guided the inclusion of the Gurney (1981) scale in the present enquiry -

- (i) The items themselves appeared to provide adequate coverage of the reasons frequently cited as causes for unemployment. Among the external sources covered in the scale were, the prejudice of employers towards young people, governmental policy, competition from older workers, luck and having contacts regarding employment opportunities. The internal sources incorporated in the scale were - effort, work motivation, qualifications, lack of self-confidence generally and in the interview situation and general appearance.

In an attempt to ensure that no major areas had been omitted from the adolescents' point of view the respondents were asked to respond to one of two statements regarding their reasons for obtaining a job when they left school. (1)

(1) Responses to these two questions can be found in Appendix G and they indicated that no major areas were omitted.

- (ii) Because the present enquiry followed closely upon the work and research design of Gurney (1981) it would be possible to make a direct comparison between the two studies and a test of the generality of observed differences for a sample of New Zealand school-leavers would be forthcoming.
- (iii) Another important consideration was the cost and time involved in developing and piloting an alternative instrument. Moreover, there would be no guarantee that a scale if developed would exhibit psychometric properties superior to those established by Gurney. Generation of psychometrically sound scales involves a multi-man-year research programme clearly beyond the scope of the present study.
- (iv) Limited psychometric and validation work was carried out on the scale. Gurney (1981) reports alpha coefficients of .51 and .54. Thus only a modest index of internal consistency was achieved. The factor structure of the inventory was also examined both prior to and after leaving school. The author reports that at both times more than 90% of the variance was accounted for by three factors a general internal factor, a general external factor and a specific situational factor, which is in general accordance with the theory

on which it was based. While Gurney (1981) did not present the factor matrix, the present writer can only assume that the items corresponding to the internal/external dimension actually loaded on those factors.

In lieu of the practical difficulties involved in developing an alternative scale it was rationalized that a scale with some, but limited psychometric work was a preferred option.

C. Procedures

(i) Development of the Questionnaire:

In an effort to eradicate any major problems in the readability and general understanding of the questionnaire a small number of secondary school students (N=16) known to the researcher and planning on leaving school at the end of the year completed copies of the questionnaire with the researcher present in their homes.

A number of questions were put to the respondents during and upon completion of the questionnaire regarding -

- (a) Their general levels of understanding.
- (b) The personal relevance of the questions, that is, to assess the extent to which the questions exhibited face validity.

- (c) Whether respondents felt at ease and could answer the questions honestly as opposed to how they felt others might answer them, that is, to assess the possible effects of social desirability.
- (d) The suitability of the response codes.
- (e) The physical layout and organisation of the questionnaire.

This small group of respondents on the whole indicated that they had little or no difficulty with the questionnaire, found the questions personally relevant and appeared to enjoy the task.

As a result of the discussion a number of problems surfaced and relevant modifications were made to the questionnaire.

- (a) A small number of the negatively-keyed items seemed to provide some conceptual difficulties, especially for the younger respondents. While it is recommended to reverse the scale for a portion of the items to prevent the possibility of a response set, it was reasoned that less confusion would result by changing the items concerned.
- (b) In the first instance, the self-esteem scale (Coopersmith, 1967) was forced choice in nature, that is, respondents indicated that the statement was 'like' or 'unlike' them. The respondents in the pilot study commented that they

disliked the extreme nature of the response codes. It was rationalized that more honest and meaningful responses would be elicited, and the items would appear less threatening if a Likert scale was utilized.

(c) Slight modifications were made to the physical layout and organization of the instructions of the questionnaire to facilitate responding.

(d) In order that the questionnaire could be completed in an hour (a single school period), a short form of the self-esteem scale was utilized, in order to prevent undue disruption of routine in the schools.

(ii) The Main Field Work; Methodological Aspects -

(a) The Explanatory Letter -

At least a week prior to administration of the questionnaire, an explanatory letter was sent to the parents of those school-leavers expressing an interest in participating in the study. In writing the letter the following points were taken into consideration -

(i) The need to clearly outline the nature and purpose of the research, to inform the parents and participants as to the practical significance of the study, what the data were

to be used for, and to allay any doubts that participation in the study might in any way threaten their privacy or reputations.

- (ii) To stress the confidentiality and anonymity of the replies, that is, to indicate how the respondents' privacy and confidentiality was to be treated.
- (iii) To identify the names and positions of those involved in the research. That is, to establish the legitimacy of the study.
- (iv) The need to outline what advantages would be afforded those who participated in the study.
- (v) The need to give parents and respondents the chance to enquire further about the study if necessary and the opportunity to view the results of the study.
- (vi) It was felt that there would be less resistance if parents were assured that time would not be taken out of examination subjects.
- (vii) It was felt that with the written support of the Principal a greater degree of participation would eventuate.

(b) The First Stage -

The first stage of the main fieldwork was carried out over a period of two weeks, shortly before the end of the third term in 1981.

The decision to carry out the study so close to the end of the third term had both advantages and disadvantages. The main disadvantage was the possibility that some students might be unwilling to participate with examinations approaching. It was felt that this type of resistance could be overcome to a large extent by stressing to respondents and parents via the explanatory letter, that time taken out of class would not be in examination subjects and that the questionnaire would be administered within a single period.

On the other hand, by surveying students' attitudes so close to their transition from school to work meant that a more relevant assessment of their attitudes could be obtained.

The questionnaire was completed during the class hour in groups of varying sizes, ranging from twenty to fifty. This variation in procedure was obviously necessary, for it was essential that administration of the questionnaire avoided undue disruption to the life and work of the schools concerned.

When administering the questionnaire to the larger groups it was essential to exercise some control over ensuring that the questions were completed by individual respondents and that as little collaboration as possible would take place.

All that could be done to this end was to stress to the respondents that it was their own attitudes, ideas and opinions the researcher was interested in and not those of others, and that there was no right or wrong answers to any of the questions.

Another disadvantage associated with a group administration particularly pertinent with the larger groups, was the problem of literacy. In designing the questionnaire care was taken to avoid technical jargon and to ensure the questions could be answered by those with poorer language skills. This potential problem seemed to have been overcome at face value as those involved in the pilot study seemed to have no difficulty in this regard. During the debriefing it was also stressed that should there be any problem or questions in completing the questionnaire, the researcher was willing to assist, and all attempts were made to create an atmosphere in which the respondents would feel at ease and not threatened in doing so.

In the researcher's opinion students understood and responded to the researcher's request regarding the importance of completing the questionnaire individually. On the whole the atmosphere in the classroom was a quiet one and respondents worked through the questionnaire individually. On occasions when discussion between respondents was evident, or upon request the researcher approached the students tactfully to avoid embarrassment in an endeavour to find out the nature of the problem. If a respondent indicated they were having difficulties understanding a particular question, elaborations were given. Judging by comments made by students at the time and those included on the comment page the majority had enjoyed answering the questions and had no difficulties in completing the questionnaire.

(c) The Second Stage -

Approximately four and a half months after the respondents completed the questionnaire prior to leaving school the follow-up stage of the research commenced.

The decision to wait four and a half months before following-up the group of school leavers was based on three main considerations -

- (i) Firstly, it is likely that a longer period of time would have focussed on the less able school-leavers who will always be represented among the unemployed, whereas the focus of the present enquiry was concerned with school-leavers in general.
- (ii) It was reported in the monthly Employment Operations, May 1981 that the majority of school-leavers, 57.91% do remain unemployed for up to thirteen weeks, and 26.89% between thirteen and twentysix weeks. It was reasoned that a lapse of time somewhere between thirteen and twentysix weeks would capture a larger number of unemployed school-leavers.
- (iii) Finally, several writers have noted (Hill, 1978; Jahoda, 1979; Hayes and Nutman, 1981) that the unemployed typically pass through three phases. The first is relatively short, but may last up to approximately two months and is characterized by feelings of 'optimism' regarding placement in the workforce. The second phase may last up to several months, with the third phase setting in after about nine months. According to these writers it is during the second stage that psychological deterioration

occurs. Thus, a period of less than two months would be less likely to result in changes in self-esteem as the respondents may still have been in the initial phase.

As different forms of the questionnaire were to be utilized in the follow-up, depending on the respondent's employment status, it was necessary to telephone respondents to ascertain this. While a time-consuming approach, it proved highly successful for the following reasons -

- (i) Reminding respondents of the commitment they made the previous year ensured a high rate of return of the follow-up questionnaires.
- (ii) By personally contacting respondents, care could be taken to allay any doubts regarding the nature of the follow-up investigation.
- (iii) When individuals received the mailed questionnaire they had recent recall of its source and would perceive a direct link between it and the school they had left.

In telephoning the respondents an informal approach was taken. Care was taken in each

call to introduce myself and to explain the intentions of the call, that is, to follow up a visit to their school the previous year when they had completed a questionnaire for the researcher and had agreed to be contacted again this year regarding their experiences since leaving school, to briefly explain the nature and purpose of the follow-up investigation and to stress the confidentiality and anonymity of replies.

The initial mailing of the questionnaire to respondents included an explanatory letter, the relevant questionnaire to be completed, a reply card and two stamped self-addressed envelopes.

(d) The Cover Letter -

The explanatory letter was similar in structure to the first letter, with the same points taken into consideration. In addition, general instructions were contained within the letter.

Specifically, respondents were cautioned against omissions in responses, to circle only one alternative when asked to choose between a number of responses and that there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers to any of the questions. Apart from these special instructions, the questionnaire was otherwise self-explanatory.

(e) The Reply Card -

The purpose of utilizing a reply card was twofold.

- (i) Firstly, to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of replies to respondents, while at the same time still enabling the researcher to establish who had completed and returned the questionnaire.
- (ii) Secondly, it was a convenient way of enabling the researcher to follow-up non-respondents.

(f) The Unstructured Interviews -

Because such a small number of school-leavers in this sample were unemployed at the time of the follow-up investigation (N=6), it was felt necessary to obtain a more complete account of their experiences. To this end the relevant respondents were contacted and their co-operation for an interview was sought and arranged where possible.

In interviewing the respondents, the interviewer adopted an informal approach to ensure the interviewees would feel at ease and to encourage them to respond freely and fully. At the outset, the interviewer briefly explained the nature and purpose of the interview, the type of questions to be asked and the areas interested in.

Care was taken to stress that all replies would be treated in the strictest of confidence, that is, they would not personally be mentioned in the write-up.

The interviewer also explained that she would need to take notes during the interview so that all they told the interviewer could be remembered. During a pilot study with some unemployed students, the writer experimented with using a tape-recorder and found that relatively complete notes could be taken without it, and given the inexperience of the interviewer it was useful to have the notes on hand to refer to during the course of the interview. During and at the end of the interview, respondents were given the opportunity to add anything they wished to.

The un-structured interviews took place in a room at the University. Respondents were picked up and taken home by the interviewer which proved useful in establishing initial rapport.

D. The Sample

In general terms, what was required was a sample of respondents representing adolescent male and female school-leavers. Considering the exploratory nature of the enquiry, it was desirable to obtain respondents with

varied background and individual characteristics. Thus, the aim was to sample as many school-leavers as possible within the constraints of finance and time available.

Within this framework two alternative sources from which to draw a sample presented themselves for consideration.

The first was to approach the Labour Department and obtain from them a list of recent school-leavers who were unemployed and match them to a group of recently employed school-leavers. The difficulties associated with such an approach became immediately apparent.

- (i) The approach like many others concerning the transition from school to work would be cross-sectional in nature with the consequent inability to establish cause and effect relationships.
- (ii) It would be costly and time-consuming to obtain a large pool of respondents with which to match.
- (iii) There would be difficulties in obtaining a source of recently employed school-leavers. To the researcher's knowledge no such records are held. Furthermore once contacted the researcher would have the added problem of establishing the legitimacy of the research. That is, respondents would perceive no direct link between the school they left and suddenly being confronted with a questionnaire.

The approach used was adopted for the following reasons -

- (i) By following through the same group of respondents it would be possible to examine changes that had occurred as a result of the transitional experience.
- (ii) It was a source where large numbers of school-leavers were readily available, thus would prove to be a less costly and time-consuming approach.
- (iii) The data obtained would be concurrent rather than retrospective.
- (iv) It was felt that with the written support of the Principal, the legitimacy of the study would be more easily established.
- (v) At the follow-up stage, respondents would perceive a direct link between the school they left and the request for co-operation in the project.

A total of twohundred and three potential school-leavers volunteered to participate in the study. Volunteers were utilized in the present study due to the commitment of time required for the study. Secondly, it was felt that it would not be ethical to forcibly request co-operation. The characteristics of the sample are set out in Table 6.

From Table 6 it can be seen that males and females were equally represented in the original sample and at the follow-up stage of the research. While just over half of the respondents were in the sixth form, this could be expected given the trend towards students staying on longer at secondary schools. An adequate coverage of pupils from other educational levels was obtained.

Parental occupations were classified according to the socio-economic index of occupations developed by Elley and Irving (1976) which is an objective index of socio-economic status based on educational qualifications and income levels within broad occupational groups. It was desirable to utilize a scale which was a composite index of socio-economic status based on education and income as large numbers of respondents were uncertain of the educational level of their parents (37% of fathers' and 29% of mothers' qualifications were unknown). The Elley and Irving scale correlates highly with prestige based scales. Elley and Irving (1976) report correlations of .83 to .90 with other well known occupational scales, and both have been highly related on other indices of social class (Ballard, 1972).

The distribution of paternal occupations compared with urban levels for New Zealand (Elley and Irving, 1976) suggests that the socio-economic spectrum was adequately covered, though in the present enquiry level 2 was over-represented and level 5 was under-represented, with the bulk of respondents clustering in the middle.

From the total number contacted (N=197), 157 (77.4%) respondents returned their questionnaires, 7 (3.5%) were excluded from the analysis because large portions of the questionnaire were incomplete. Thus the final response rate achieved was 73.90% (N=150) which was pleasingly high considering the lapse of time before the follow-up questionnaire was administered.

Because the non-respondents were relatively evenly distributed throughout the groups that formed the basis for analysis it was felt that mortality bias would be negligible and therefore unnecessary to analyse differences between respondents and non-respondents. Secondly, only one unemployed person failed to return the questionnaire and after numerous follow-up telephone calls it was eventually ascertained that the respondent had left Christchurch with no forwarding address. On this basis it was concluded that the proportions of non-returns was similar for all groups. Finally, the qualifications of those respondents questioned at the follow-up stage approximated the proportions drawn from each form prior to leaving school.

All but one group of school-leavers, the unemployed, were represented in the follow-up stage of the research, which consequently curtailed an analysis between them and their employed counterparts. The reasons why this may have occurred and the resulting implications will be discussed in a later chapter.⁽¹⁾

(1) Factors that may have contributed to this outcome are considered and discussed in Chapter 9, p.201 of the thesis.

TABLE 6

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

<u>Number of students contacted:</u>		203	100%
<u>Distribution of Respondents from each school:</u>			
School A		81	40%
School B		79	39
School C		24	12
School D		17	8
No response		2	1
<u>Sex Distribution of Respondents:</u>			
T1	Males	91	45%
	Females	112	55
T2	Males	65	43.3%
	Females	85	56.7
<u>Distribution of Respondents by form:</u>			
5th form		56	28%
6th form		105	52
7th form		42	21
<u>FOLLOW-UP STAGE:</u>			
Questionnaires mailed at follow-up		197	97.0%
Valid questionnaires returned		150	73.90
Incomplete questionnaires returned		7	3.50
Students contacted but unwilling to participate in follow-up)		5	2.50
Students unable to be contacted		6	2.90
Non-returns		35	17.20
<u>Employment Status (T2):</u>			
Employed full/part-time		76	50.70%
University/Teachers College		25	16.70
Technical Institute		14	9.3
School returners		29	19.3
Unemployed		6	4.0
<u>FAMILY BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS:</u>			
<u>Father's occupation:</u>			
<u>Socio-economic level -</u>			
High	Code 1	18	8.80%
	Code 2	41	20.30
	Code 3	56	27.60
	Code 4	44	21.70
	Code 5	12	5.90
Low	Code 6	8	3.9
Retired/Beneficiary - No response		9	4.40
<u>Mother's occupation:</u>			
	Code 1	5	2.50 %
	Code 2	10	4.90
	Code 3	41	20.20
	Code 4	36	17.70
	Code 5	20	9.90
	Code 6	20	9.90
Not working		65	32.00
No response		6	2.90

(continued over) -

Father's Qualifications:

At least 2 years secondary school	69	34%
School Certificate	26	11
University Entrance	15	7
University Degree	21	10
Not known	67	33
No response	8	4

Mother's Qualifications:

At least 2 years secondary school	75	37%
School Certificate	41	20
University Entrance	23	11
University Degree	6	3
Not known	58	29

The mean age of the sample was 17.26 years.

TABLE 6a

HIGHEST QUALIFICATION OBTAINED BY RESPONDENTS
ON LEAVING SCHOOL:

Qualification	Number of Subjects								Total%
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6		
School Certificate	10	7	6	7	5	2	-	37	24.7%
University Entrance (A)	-	-	1	-	2	31	2	35	23.3
University Entrance (SE)	-	12	7	6	6	1	-	32	21.3
Sixth Form Certificate	-	1	3	2	3	5	-	14	9.3
Bursary	-	-	6	-	7	12	-	25	16.7
Higher School Certificate	-	-	-	1	-	7	-	7	4.7
								<u>150</u>	<u>100</u>

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS:SCHOOL LEAVERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOME ASPECTS OF WORK

This section reports frequencies and percentages responding to each of the items examining work involvement, attitudes towards pay, promotion and occupational prestige.

The data prior to leaving school were used for the analysis and is not broken down by sex or employment status as few differences or changes were observed. Where differences were forthcoming they are reported within the text. Differences in work involvement between and within the groups is not examined in this Chapter of results but is dealt with in Chapter 5 following. The general direction of the correlations between the items is also examined and where appropriate these are reported in each relevant section. The reader is referred to Appendix F for the table of inter-correlations.

The purpose of this section is then to present an overall picture of the school-leavers' attitudes towards some aspects of work. It is by no means exhaustive or representative of all work attitudes, nor was it intended to be. It does however, illustrate the meaning of some aspects of work to the group of young people surveyed.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analyses in this chapter follows the following conventions.

- (i) A table setting out the frequencies and percentages responding to each item relevant to the class of attitudes being examined.
- (ii) The alternative answers to the questions were given a scale value ranging from 1 to 5 when calculating the significance of differences between and within the three groups (employed leavers, school returners and tertiary students). A two-way analysis of variance was conducted using sex and employment status as the independent variables and the attitude scale score as the dependent variable to identify the presence of differences between the three groups.
- (iii) Where significant differences were forthcoming, the location and direction of the difference was obtained using a one-way analysis of variance with contrasts. The associated t -value and significance level is reported for each contrast. The Scheffe procedure was used as it is a stricter test and was able to deal with unequal cell sizes (Nie et al, 1975).
- (iv) Changes over time were analyzed by means of a repeated measures t -test (paired-comparison) for each group separately.

A. Work Involvement

The responses to questions regarding work-involvement (see Table 7) indicate that this sample of school-leavers were on the whole highly motivated to work and saw work as an important part of their lives - 92% strongly agreed or agreed with that statement *"Getting a job when I leave school is important"*, and 90% with the statement *"I would not like to be out of work when I leave school."*

Money was not prominently in the minds of these young people, and it appears that working means more to them than economic gains; 82% indicated that they would *"Still continue to work somewhere even if they won enough money to live comfortably"*, and 44% noted that they would still do overtime even if they didn't need the money. Furthermore, the majority of respondents did not rank welfare highly as an alternative to work, 89% would still continue to work somewhere even if the Unemployment Benefit was very high, and 86% indicated that they would not like to be on the Unemployment Benefit when they left school.

A possible reason for this is that working offered them a sense of purpose - 87% indicated that it would. However, other activities were also important to them. While almost half of the respondents (41%) felt that work was more important than other activities, almost a third (29%) noted that other activities were more important to them than work. Two alternative explanations might resolve this discrepancy. Firstly, while work is clearly high on their list of priorities,

the importance of 'other activities' may indicate a realistic appreciation of the opportunities open to them, that is, there may be a discrepancy between their expectations of what work should offer and the ability of the labour market to satisfy the expectations. A second explanation might be that at this stage of their development, 'other activities' such as leisure, socializing with peers, sporting and ambitions to travel are more important priorities than work. On the basis of the evidence available, it is not possible to favour one interpretation over another.

In summary, the degree of work-involvement exhibited by the sample as a whole was particularly high, 88.4% (N=156) had scores ranging from seven to twenty, an average scale value of 2.5, only 11.6% (N=23) had scores below this, indicating that work was important in the lives of this group of school-leavers.

TABLE 7

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES TO WORK-INVOLVEMENT ITEMS

<u>ITEM</u>		<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Un-</u> <u>decided</u>	<u>Dis-</u> <u>agree</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>
1. Even if I won a great deal of money I would still continue to work somewhere	(f) (%)	74 36	94 46	19 9	7 3	8 4
2. Getting a job when I leave school is important to me	(f) (%)	137 67	50 25	6 3	5 2	2 1
3. I would not like to be on the Unemployment Benefit when I leave school	(f) (%)	108 53	66 33	12 6	6 3	10 5
4. Other activities are more important to me than work	(f) (%)	14 7	45 22	60 30	67 33	16 8
5. If the unemployment benefit was really high I would still continue to work somewhere	(f) (%)	59 29	121 60	13 6	4 2	5 2
6. I wouldn't like being out of work when I leave school	(f) (%)	115 57	68 33	8 4	4 2	6 3
7. I would only do overtime if I needed the money	(f) (%)	10 5	52 26	49 24	82 40	9 4
8. Work would make me feel I was doing something with my life	(f) (%)	78 38	99 49	14 7	8 4	3 1

B. The Importance of Wages

TABLE 8
THE IMPORTANCE OF WAGES AS A JOB CRITERION

<u>ITEM</u>		<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
9. There's no point in working except to get paid	(f)	3	15	20	85	78
	(%)	1	7	10	42	38
10. A person should choose the job which pays the most.	(f)	2	16	31	106	47
	(%)	1	8	15	52	23
11. A person should choose one job over another mostly because of higher wages	(f)	3	17	51	100	31
	(%)	1	8	25	49	15

From the responses to the questions in Table 8 regarding the importance of wages as a job criterion it can be seen that working for economic gains was not a high priority for this sample of school-leavers. Seventy-five percent (N=153) indicated that 'a person should not choose the job which pays the most' and 64% (N=131) did not regard wages as an important criterion when choosing between jobs. A striking 80% (N=163) felt that there was more to working than earning money.

A two-way analysis of variance indicated that males and females did not differ in their attitudes towards pay prior to leaving school ($F=2.811$, $p<.10$), though there was a tendency for females to be less concerned with wages than males ($t= 1.708$, $p<.09$).

No differences in attitudes towards pay between males and females were observed 4½ months later ($F=.007$, $p<.93$). No differences were observed between the groups prior to leaving school ($F=.05$, $p<.96$) or

after leaving school ($F = .303$, $p < .74$).

No changes were observed in attitudes towards pay over the 4½ month period for school-returners ($t = .11$, $p < .916$), or tertiary students ($t = .05$, $p < .96$). While not significant, there was a tendency for employed leavers to be less concerned with wages at the follow-up ($t = 1.45$, $p < .15$).

The tendency for employed leavers to be less concerned with wages as a work outcome is not surprising. The pursuit of meaningful and satisfying work tasks was often cited in reasons for occupational choice, in evaluations of what was most liked about working, and as a factor that would facilitate a decision to leave, wages assumed less importance in comparison (see Tables 39, 40 and 42, pages 166, 167 and 170 respectively).

The consistently positive correlations between many of the work-involvement items and a lack of concern for wages (see Appendix F) as a work outcome supports the notion that work-involvement is related to intrinsic, rather than to extrinsic rewards. The work-involved person in this sample of young people appears to value rewards other than economic gain in his/her motivation to work. Though the exact nature of the intrinsic motivations cannot be ascertained, material to be presented in a later section (see Table 40 p.167 and Table 42, p.170) suggests that it may be characteristics such as - Work tasks that are stimulating, involve variety, and provide individuals with an opportunity to utilize their skills and abilities, and autonomy in the

workplace, were important motives for those young people who subsequently entered full-time employment.

C. Promotion

TABLE 9

THE ATTITUDES OF SCHOOL-LEAVERS TOWARDS PROMOTION

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
12. People are better off if they are satisfied with their job (f) and aren't concerned about (%) being promoted to another job	20 10	95 47	57 28	29 14	2 1
13. You should always choose a job that will lead onto a better job	(f) 30 (%) 15	89 44	46 23	33 16	1 0
14. If people like their jobs they should be satisfied (f) and not push for promotion (%) to another job	17 8	57 28	54 27	60 30	12 6

There was more variation in response to the questions regarding promotion. While 59% (119) felt that it is important to 'choose a job that leads onto a better job' there was some indication that liking and being satisfied with a job was more important than promotion for its own sake, 57% (N=115) indicated that if people are satisfied with their jobs they should not be concerned with being promoted to another job, and 36% (N=74) agreed that 'if people like their job they should be satisfied and not push for promotion to another job'.

Both males and females had similar attitudes towards promotion ($F=2.13$ $p<.16$) prior to leaving school, and again 4½ months later ($F=.388$, $p<.53$). No initial differences were observed between the groups ($F=.646$, $p<.53$) but at T.2 there was a significant main effect for employment status ($F=4.703$, $p<.01$). A contrast test of group means indicated that employed leavers were more concerned with promotion than school returners ($t=2.99$, $p<.003$), but no differences were observed between the other groups. Repeated measures t -test indicated that at the follow-up employed leavers were significantly more concerned about promotion ($t= 3.39$, $p<.00$). No similar change was observed for school-returners ($t= .38$, $p<.705$) or tertiary students ($t= 1.90$, $p<.07$). The result is perhaps not surprising given that better training and advancement prospects was often cited as a possible reason for employed leavers considering leaving their job (see Table 42, p.170).

Tertiary students also displayed a tendency to value promotions and advancement prospects more highly. Again, this is not surprising given that increased education is often associated with advancement up the occupational hierarchy.

The items examining attitudes to promotion did not show a clear relationship with work-involvement, or attitudes towards pay or occupational prestige.⁽¹⁾ The promotion items showed low but positive correlations with work involvement and it appeared that job satisfaction, rather than promotion per se was related to occupational prestige, as indicated by the positive correlations

(1) see Appendix F.

between item 12 and items 15, 16 and 18 ($r = .18$, $r = .23$, $r = .17$, respectively) and between item 14 and items 16 and 17 ($r = .12$ and $r = .13$ respectively). That promotion showed low positive correlations between work involvement and occupational prestige, is not surprising as promotion has been found to be related to intrinsic and extrinsic work values (Wollack, et al, 1971)

D. Work as an Instrumental Variable

TABLE 10

THE EXTENT TO WHICH WORK IS SEEN AS A MEANS OF
ACHIEVING RESPECT AND PRESTIGE FROM 'SIGNIFICANT OTHERS'
AND SOCIETY.

<u>ITEM</u>		<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
15.The person who holds down a good job is the most re- spected person in the community	(f) 2 38 49 94 18 (%) 1 19 24 46 9					
16.You can measure a person pretty well by the job he does	(f) - 46 43 78 34 (%) - 23 21 38 17					
17.Having a good job makes a person worthy of praise from his friends and family	(f) 14 72 54 50 11 (%) 7 35 27 25 5					
18.My friends would not think much of me if I did not have a good job	(f) 2 21 27 99 51 (%) 1 10 13 49 25					

While work was important in the lives of those young people surveyed, responses to the questions above indicate occupational prestige is not highly valued (although the responses are varied). Seventyfour percent ($N=150$) indicated that their friends would still value them highly even if they didn't have a good job. Fiftyfive percent ($N=112$) did not feel that you can evaluate a person purely in terms of the job he/she does, and the same proportion noted that those with the 'best' jobs are not necessarily the most respected citizens. Almost half, 42% ($N=86$) agreed that having a good job gains the respect of family and friends.

Males and females displayed similar attitudes to occupational prestige prior to leaving school ($F=2.13$, $p<.15$) and at the follow-up ($F=.692$, $p<.41$). Attitudes towards occupational prestige did not vary between the groups prior to leaving school ($F=.646$, $p<.53$) or 4½ months later ($F=2.58$, $p<.08$).

At the follow-up stage tertiary students valued occupational prestige significantly more than employed leavers ($t= 2.041$, $p<.04$) and a trend to the same effect was evident between school returners and tertiary students ($t= 1.83$, $p<.07$). Attitudes remained stable over the period between leaving school and 4½ months later -

($t= .06$, $p<.96$)	-	School-returners,
($t= .08$, $p<.937$)	-	Employed-leavers,
($t= 1.55$, $p<.131$)	-	Tertiary students.

The finding that tertiary students were slightly more concerned with occupational prestige than employed leavers and school returners, and evidenced more change

over the period studied, is perhaps not surprising given that increased education generally leads to occupations which carry with them greater social status and prestige in society. The low but consistently negative correlations between the extrinsic values of attitude towards earnings and occupational prestige (see Appendix F) is consistent with the findings of Wollack et al, (1971).

E. Discussion

Responses to the work-involvement items are indicative of the high degree of work motivation displayed by the sample of school-leavers surveyed. The degree of work involvement exhibited is similar to that reported for adult workers (Morse and Weiss, 1955; Warr et al, 1980) and younger workers (Stafford et al, 1980). This finding does not support the belief among a number of employers (Colledge et al, 1978; Employer, 1979, Windshuttle, 1980), that young people are less motivated to work than in the past. It is also apparent that money was not highly valued in their motivation to work. The writer can only infer that 'intrinsic' rewards formed the basis for this high degree of work motivation. This finding supports the conclusion of a number of writers (Yankelovich, 1974; Connell, 1975; Gray and Roos, 1975; Taylor and Thompson, 1976) that less emphasis is being placed on money as a work outcome, at least for some youth, and

work is increasingly being valued for its intrinsically rewarding properties.

The prime difficulty in interpreting attitudes held towards advancement is the underlying motive for being concerned with promotion. Individuals may value promotion because of the higher wages that accompany advancement to higher level jobs or because movements up the occupational hierarchy offer more opportunities to satisfy 'higher level needs'. The lack of concern for wages displayed by this sample of young people, tentatively suggests that the latter may have a more realistic basis for this sample of school-leavers. However, it would be a mistake to allude the reader into believing the relationship is clearly established, rather it is purely suggestive.

Attitudes towards occupational prestige produced mixed results, in general an individual's position in the occupational field was not believed by this sample of school-leavers to adversely affect relationships with peers, but it was related to parental and peer approval for a reasonable proportion.

It could be concluded that occupational prestige was more highly valued than wages. This result is perhaps not surprising given that work is an important indicator of status and identity in society, and as such, is likely to be a source of reinforcement from family and friends in general.

The inter-correlations between the subsets of items were generally low, suggesting that the attitudes examined were largely independent of one another and

representative of the attitudes they were intended to measure. The correlations between the extrinsic items of attitude towards earnings and occupational prestige were in the expected negative direction. Furthermore most correlations between the work involvement items and extrinsic variables (earnings, occupational prestige) were low and positive. The promotion items showed low positive correlations with both work involvement and occupational prestige no doubt because promotion is both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature (Wollack et al, 1971). The pattern of inter-correlations, outlined above, is consistent with those reported by Wollack et al, (1971).

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS:ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
EMPLOYED LEAVERS, SCHOOL RETURNERS,
AND TERTIARY STUDENTS ON THE
DEPENDENT MEASURES.

In this chapter the internal consistency of the attribution and work involvement scales is considered, the initial equivalence of the groups on the independent variables (age, sex, socio-economic status and family size) and dependent variables (self-esteem, causal attributions and work involvement) is examined. The third section of this chapter deals with differences within and between the groups at the follow-up stage and analyses changes on the dependent variables over time. Where appropriate the findings are discussed within the relevant section. The chapter concludes with a general discussion of the results.

Statistical Analysis

The inter-item correlations for the attribution and work involvement scales were obtained using the Pearson product moment correlation formula. While product moment correlations should only be used for continuous distributions and data that satisfies parametric assumptions - homoscedastic and linear relationship, and normally

distributed data - it is reported in Nunnally (1967, 1970) that it is acceptable to use the product moment correlation for a likert rating scale and when the coefficients are being used for descriptive purposes, violation of these assumptions is not a serious problem. Thus the differences in using a non-parametric correlation coefficient would have been negligible.

A generally accepted measure of reliability to examine the internal consistency of a scale, is coefficient alpha, which estimates the reliability of a scale on the basis of the average correlations among items. The coefficient alpha was preferred to other estimates of reliability because it sets an upper limit to the reliability coefficient.

Furthermore, Nunnally (1970) reports that although coefficient alpha does not consider some sources of measurement error, in most situations the major source of error is due to the sampling of content.

The statistical analysis in this chapter takes the following format -

- (i) Nominal level data (sex, socio-economic status and family size) was tested for significant differences by means of chi-square analysis. The frequencies, column and row percentages are set out in a table, and the associated chi-square, degrees of freedom and significance level are reported.

- (ii) The presence of differences between and within the groups for interval level data was examined by means of a two-way Analysis of variance. The source of variation (main or interaction effect) is reported along with the degrees of freedom, the F-ratio and significance level.
- (iii) Where appropriate, the location of the significant difference was achieved by using a one-way analysis of variance with contrasts (Scheffe procedure), the output being the t -statistic and the associated level of significance.
- (iv) Changes on the dependent variables for each of the three groups over time were analysed for significant change by means of a repeated measures t -test (paired-comparison). The means, standard deviation, t -value and the probability level are reported in a table for each group separately.
- (v) To locate where changes had occurred and to aid in interpretation, each item on the dependent measures was subject to a repeated measures t -test, separately for each group. The item means, prior to leaving school, and at the follow-up stage are reported along with the t -value and level of significance.

A. The Attribution Scale

Because only limited psychometric work had been carried out on the attribution scale used in the present inquiry it was felt necessary to examine (i) the pattern of inter-correlations among the items to establish whether they were in the expected direction, (ii) the internal consistency of the scale, and (iii) whether individual items had the presumed relationship to what the total inventory was measuring.

TABLE 11

INTER-ITEM CORRELATIONS OF THE ATTRIBUTION SCALE PRIOR
TO LEAVING SCHOOL

[illegible]

It can be seen from Table 11 that the inter-item correlations of the attribution scale were low and while the majority were in the expected positive direction, a number were not.⁽¹⁾ The low inter-item correlations and presence of negative correlations suggest that there was not a great deal of communality among the items, and a large proportion of the variance was unexplained.

The coefficient alpha for the attribution inventory was obtained using SPSS Sub-programme Reliability. The alpha coefficients obtained for the sample of New Zealand school leavers were, .38 for the data obtained prior to leaving school (T.1) and .39 for the follow-up data (T.2), which were surprisingly low and considerably lower than those reported by Gurney (1981), which were .51 and .54 respectively. The low coefficient alpha raised doubts of the extent to which the individual items in the scale were related to what the total scale was measuring.

A low coefficient alpha is either an indication that the scale is too short, or that the items are not measuring similar content. The following table sets out the item-whole correlations for each item in the attribution scale. The larger the correlation between the item score and the total score, the greater the relationship between what the item is measuring and what the total scale is measuring.

(1) The inter-item correlations were expected to be positive, as the scale value of some items were adjusted, so that all items loaded in the same direction.

TABLE 12

ITEM-TOTAL CORRELATIONS OF ATTRIBUTION ITEMS PRIOR
TO LEAVING SCHOOL (T.1) AND AGAIN 4½ MONTHS LATER (T.2)

Item	Item-total Correlation	
	(T.1)	(T.2)
1. Young people miss out on getting jobs because employers are prejudiced against them.	.08	.07
2. If you miss out on getting work it is because you are not good enough	.04	.04
3. Kids get work if they look hard enough and often enough	.22	.39
4. The Government is to blame for young people being out of work	.30	.22
5. Getting a job depends on sheer good luck	.26	.40
6. School-leavers are unemployed because older people have taken all the jobs	.07	.23
7. Young people don't get jobs because they are not good enough at "putting themselves over" in applications and interviews	.04	.08
8. You can get a job if you are well qualified	.15	.00
9. People who haven't got work don't really want to work or haven't looked hard enough	.20	.20
10. If you are good looking and have lots of confidence you'll get a job	-.14	-.19
11. To get a job, you need someone with influence to "put in a good word" for you	.18	.29
12. Going to the right school and having the right contacts is a big part of getting a job	.24	.20

All items apart from one (item 10) had positive item-whole correlations indicating that there was some degree of common content being measured. Generally item-whole correlations of .20 are acceptable (Nunnally, 1970; Tuckman, 1978), only five items (T.1)

reached this level, (items 3, 4, 5, 9 and 12), two further items had marginally high item-whole correlations (items 11 and 8), at the follow-up (T.2) seven items had acceptable item-whole correlations (items 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11 and 12). The item-whole correlations of the remaining items, while positive, were low, which partially explains why the coefficient alphas were so low.

The item-total correlation of item 10 was reasonably high and negative, indicating that rather than high scores reflecting internal attribution, they reflected external attribution. The high negative item-total correlation of item 10 reduced the alpha coefficient markedly. Indeed, deletion of this item would increase the alpha coefficient at T.1 to .46 and T.2 to .48.

The coefficient alphas obtained, and the item-whole correlations indicate that the measure should be subject to future refinements if it is to prove to be a reliable and valid instrument for measuring causal ascriptions. Furthermore, it also suggests that the item-whole correlations should be considered when examining changes that occurred in particular items over time. If the item correlated reasonably highly, changes in attribution style could perhaps be noted, however, when the item-whole correlations are low, changes might be best accounted for by the specific content of the item/s rather than in terms of causal ascription.

Another problem that emerged was that on two

items the magnitude of item-whole correlations changed over the two points in time, that is, items 6 and 8 which suggests that, error due to fluctuations over time has altered the relationship of individual items to what the scale was intended to measure, thus questioning the stability of the instrument over repeated measures and further complicates the interpretation of changes over time.

Thus the changes observed over time may in fact be an artifact of the measuring instrument. There is of course little the researcher can do to control for this weakness in the measuring instrument. All that can be done ipso facto is to proceed with caution when examining differences between groups and changes over time. Ideally, research should be an iterative process, altering concepts and measures as weaknesses become apparent. Such a task was however beyond the scope of the present study, and the limitations of the attribution measure severely limit conclusions that may result.

B. The Work Involvement Scale

TABLE 13

INTER-ITEM CORRELATIONS OF THE WORK INVOLVEMENT SCALE

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	1.00	.14	.06	.21	.39	.08	.22	.18
2		1.00	.24	.18	.24	.26	.04	.36
3			1.00	.17	.20	.38	.03	.22
4				1.00	.25	.13	.14	.27
5					1.00	.33	.26	.20
6						1.00	.14	.20
7							1.00	.03
8								1.00

The inter-item correlations of the work involvement items were, on the whole, positive and significant, indicating that there was a reasonable degree of communality among the items. To provide further support for this contention, alpha coefficients of reliability were computed at both points in time, to obtain a more precise measure of internal consistency. The coefficients obtained were, .72 (prior to leaving school) and .74 for the follow-up data. The alpha coefficients obtained for the present study compare favourably with those reported by Warr et al (1979) in two studies of male manual workers (.63 and .64) and those of Stafford, Jackson and Banks (1980) who reported an alpha coefficient of .71 in a sample of young people. The mean item-whole correlations for the present study were, .42 (T.1) and .45 (T.2) which again compare favourably with the above mentioned studies. The

item-whole correlations are presented in the following table and all are acceptably high suggesting that the instrument is reliable in terms of internal consistency for such a short scale.

TABLE 14

ITEM-TOTAL CORRELATIONS OF WORK INVOLVEMENT ITEMS PRIOR TO LEAVING SCHOOL (T.1) AND AGAIN 4½ MONTHS LATER (T.2)

Item	Item-total Correlation	
	(T.1)	(T.2)
1. Even if I won a great deal of money I would still continue to work somewhere	.36	.48
2. Getting a job when I leave school is important to me	.43	.55
3. I would not like to be on the Unemployment Benefit when I leave school	.40	.39
4. Other activities are more important to me than work	.43	.55
5. If the unemployment benefit was really high I would still continue to work somewhere	.54	.50
6. I wouldn't like being out of work when I leave school	.49	.40
7. I would only do overtime if I needed the money	.25	.40
8. Work would make me feel that I was doing something with my life	.48	.32
<u>Mean item-total correlation:</u>	\bar{x} .42	\bar{x} .45

In conclusion, the work involvement scale used for the present enquiry appears to exhibit satisfactory psychometric qualities, there is a high degree of communality among individual items and what the total scale is measuring.

C. Between and Within Group Comparisons

The research design yielded three groups whose scores could be compared with one another and examined for changes over time.⁽¹⁾ The three groups are:

- a) Those respondents who left school and secured employment within 4½ months of leaving school. (N=76)
- b) Those students who returned to school for a further year. (N=29)
- c) Those students who entered a tertiary institution (University, Teachers College, Technical Institute). (N=39)

Since the assignment of respondents to the three employment status groups was neither random, nor could be assumed random, an important early step in the analysis was to examine the data obtained prior to respondents leaving school, in an endeavour to determine whether there was any important differences between the groups who later formed the basis of analysis. The purpose of doing this was to establish the initial equivalence of the groups, so that any forthcoming changes could be examined in terms of pre-determining factors or as a result of transitional experiences.

(1) Because the number of unemployed school leavers was so small (N=6) they were excluded from the analysis and dealt with separately in Chapter 6.

The three groups that formed the basis for analysis were therefore examined for differences in the distribution of age, sex, socio-economic status and family size as well as in self-esteem, causal attributions and work involvement. The school leavers' attitudes towards pay, promotion and occupational prestige are not considered within this chapter, they were dealt with in Chapter 4.

(i) Group Comparisons on Initial Measures:

(a) Age -

A one-way analysis of variance of age at the time of the first survey indicated a highly significant difference between the groups in age, ($F=11.23$, $2df$, $p<.00$).

TABLE 15

MEAN AGE OF GROUPS

Employed leavers	17.27
School returners	16.83
Tertiary students	17.64

The group means were contrasted with one another and tested for differences by means of a Scheffe's test. Employed leavers were younger than tertiary students ($t= 2.65$, $p<.01$). School returners were younger than both tertiary students ($t= 4.74$, $p<.000$) and employed leavers ($t= 2.92$, $p<.004$).

The finding that tertiary students were older than the other groups is not surprising given that to enter many tertiary institutions necessarily requires a longer stay at school to gain the appropriate entry qualifications. The age difference between school returners and employed leavers is consistent with the findings of Gurney (1980), and not surprising given that 34.5% (N=10) returned to the fifth form, thus likely making school-returners younger on average than the other groups.

(b) Sex -

TABLE 16

SEX-DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GROUPS

		<u>Employment Status</u>		
		<u>Employed</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Tertiary</u>
Sex: Males		34	13	15
		54.8	21.0	24.2%
		44.7	44.8	38.5
Females		42	16	24
		51.2	19.5	29.3
		55.3	55.2	61.5

The ratio of males to females was the same for employed leavers, school returners and tertiary students, as was the ratio of males to females within each group ($\chi^2=.392$ (2df) $p<.822$).

(c) Socio-economic Status -

TABLE 17

<u>SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GROUPS</u>							
	<u>Socio-economic Level</u>						
	(high)			(low)			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Employed	6	17	23	13	3	3	65
School	4	8	4	9	1	1	27
Tertiary	5	7	11	7	3	3	36
							<u>130</u>

Because the cell sizes for the different levels of socio-economic status when trichotomized were too small for significance testing, it was not possible to test the socio-economic composition of the three groups with any level of certainty. Furthermore, because the samples of school returners and tertiary students were small any forthcoming differences would be tentative as a result. There was also some redundancy, as 14 (9.7%) did not respond to this question.

(d) Family Size -

TABLE 18

DIFFERENCES IN FAMILY SIZE BETWEEN THE THREE GROUPS

<u>Family Size</u>	<u>Employment Status</u>		
	Employed	School	Tertiary
Only Child	20	10	11
	48.8	24.4	26.8
	26.7	35.4	28.2
One Sibling	24	11	15
	48.0	22.0	30.0
	32.0	37.9	38.5
Two Siblings	19	4	8
	61.3	12.9	25.8
	25.3	13.8	20.5
Three or more Siblings	12	4	5
	57.1	19.0	23.8
	16.0	13.8	12.8

The chi-square analysis revealed no significant differences in the distribution of family size, either within or between groups ($\chi^2 = 2.36$, 6df, $p < .88$).

Analysis of differences for the dependent variables of Self-esteem, causal attribution and work-involvement:

Because Gurney (1980, 1981) found significant differences between males and females in both self-esteem and causal ascriptions, two 2 X 3 analyses of variance were conducted in which sex and employment status were the independent variables and self-esteem and attributions prior to leaving school were the dependent variables.

(e) Self-esteem -

TABLE 19

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE IN SELF-ESTEEM SCORES BY
SEX (2 LEVELS) AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS (3 LEVELS)

Source of Variation	df	F	p value
<u>Main Effects:</u>			
Sex	1	.625	.431NS
Employment Status	2	.383	.683NS
<u>Interaction Effects:</u>			
Sex x employment status	2	.150	.899NS

Results of the analysis of variance in self-esteem indicated that there was no main effect for either sex or employment status, and neither was the interaction significant. Thus, it can be safely assumed that the self-esteem scores of those school-leavers who later made up the three groups did not differ significantly. Any forthcoming changes

could therefore be explained in terms of transitional experiences or maturation effects. This finding is at odds with the finding of Gurney (1980) who reported that females, prior to leaving school, had significantly lower self-esteems than males. That self-esteem prior to leaving school was not predictive of later employment status is consistent with the findings of Gurney (1980).

(f) Causal Attributions -

TABLE 20
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE IN ATTRIBUTION SCORES

Source of Variation	df	F	p Value
<u>Main effects:</u>			
Sex	1	.808	.37 NS
Employment Status	2	.412	.66 NS
<u>Interaction effects:</u>			
Sex x Employment status	2	2.08	.13 NS

The analysis of Variance in Attribution scores prior to leaving school again showed no significant main effect for sex or employment status and neither was the interaction significant. That is, the groups that later formed the basis for analysis were initially equivalent in their 'style of attribution'. This finding is at odds with the finding of Gurney (1981) who found that females prior to leaving school were significantly more internally orientated than males,

such a difference was not observed in the present enquiry using the same attribution measure. The finding that causal attributions prior to leaving school were not predictive of employment status is consistent with the findings of Gurney (1981).

(g) Work Involvement -

TABLE 21

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE IN WORK INVOLVEMENT (T.1) BY
SEX AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Source of Variation	df	F	p Value
<u>Main effects:</u>			
Sex	1	.221	.639 NS
Employment Status	2	3.19	.04*
<u>Interaction effects:</u>			
Sex x Employment status	2	3.1	.04*

From the results of the analysis of variance in work involvement, it can be seen that there was a main effect for employment status ($F = 3.19$, 2df, $p < .04$) but not for sex and the interaction between sex and employment status was also significant.

Univariate tests (Scheffe's test) indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean work involvement scores of school returners and tertiary students ($t = 1.237$, $p < .218$) and no difference in work involvement between employed leavers and school

returners ($t = .367$, $p < .714$). Tertiary students did however have lower mean work involvement scores than employed leavers ($t = 1.94$, $p < .05$) which accounts for the main effect in the Analysis of Variance.

Univariate tests were conducted for each group separately using sex as the independent variable in order to explain the significant interaction between sex and employment status. No significant differences were found in the mean work-involvement scores of employed males ($\bar{x} = 15.12$) and females ($\bar{x} = 15.59$), $t = .62$, $p < .54$ or between male ($\bar{x} = 15.31$) and female ($\bar{x} = 16.00$) school returners, $t = .485$, $p < .632$. Male tertiary students ($\bar{x} = 18.93$) were less work-involved than female tertiary students ($\bar{x} = 15.48$), $t = 2.40$, $p < .02$.⁽¹⁾

While it was not possible to test for differences in sexes, between the groups, the difference in work involvement scores, between male and female tertiary students appears to be sufficiently large, to explain the interaction effect in the analysis of variance.

(ii) Analysis of the follow-up Data:

Having determined that there was no significant effect for sex and employment status prior to leaving school in self-esteem or attributions, the next step was to submit the follow-up data to analysis of variance, again with sex and employment status as the

(1) Higher scores reflect less work involvement.

independent variables. Interpretation of differences in work involvement was a little more complicated because of the initial differences between groups.

(a) Self-esteem -

TABLE 22
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE IN SELF-ESTEEM (T.2) BY SEX
AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Source of Variation	df	F	p Value
<u>Main effects:</u>			
Sex	1	.265	.61 NS
Employment status	2	.217	.81 NS
<u>Interaction effects:</u>			
Sex x Employment status	2	.395	.67 NS

The results of the two-way analysis of variance indicated that 4½ months later, the self-esteem scores between the groups did not differ significantly, and neither were any significant differences observed between the self-esteem scores of males and females, either within or between groups. This finding is contrary to the findings of Gurney (1981), that females who subsequently entered employment experienced a significant increase in self-esteem. No such effect was observed in the present enquiry.

The analysis of variance did not however ascertain whether the self-esteem of the groups had changed over time, therefore self-esteem scores for each group were derived at both points in time and subject to a repeated measures *t*-test. The results are presented in Table 23.

TABLE 23

Means, Standard Deviations, Repeated Measures (*t*) values and Significance levels for Self-Esteem Scores prior to leaving school (T.1) and 4½ months later (T.2)

Group/time	\bar{x}	SD	<i>t</i>	p Value
<u>School Returners:</u>				
T.1	47.81	8.16	.48	.63 NS
T.2	46.68	8.10		
<u>Employed Leavers:</u>				
T.1	48.89	8.16	1.63	.11 NS
T.2	46.40	8.44		
<u>Tertiary Students:</u>				
T.1	48.55	6.81		
T.2	46.23	7.46	1.18	.25 NS

Although the difference in mean self-esteem scores between the three groups did not differ significantly, the obtained *t* value and significance level for employed leavers indicated a trend to higher levels of self-esteem compared with both school returners and tertiary students. In an endeavour to examine where these changes had occurred, repeated measures *t*-Tests were conducted on all items for all subgroups of the sample, the results are presented in Table 24 following.

TABLE 24

REPEATED MEASURES t -TEST OF SELF-ESTEEM ITEMS PRIOR TO LEAVING SCHOOL (T.1) AND
 4½ MONTHS LATER (T.2):

ITEM	GROUP						
	Employed Leavers			School Returners		Tertiary Students	
	Time	\bar{x}	t	\bar{x}	t	\bar{x}	t
1. I often wish I were someone else	T.1	1.72	1.04	1.69		1.69	.29
	T.2	1.60		1.76	-.40	1.64	
2. I find it very hard to talk in front of a group	T.1	2.37		2.44		2.31	
	T.2	2.32	0.33	2.44	0.00	2.13	.91
3. There are lots of things I'd change about myself if I could	T.1	2.21		2.21		2.21	
	T.2	2.03	1.45	2.04	.89	2.00	1.16
4. I can make up my mind without too much trouble	T.1	2.04		2.04		2.08	
	T.2	2.01	0.23	1.86	.96	2.15	-0.43
5. I'm a lot of fun to be with	T.1	2.07		2.00		2.18	
	T.2	2.17	-1.02	1.82	1.09	2.21	-0.26
6. I get easily upset at home	T.1	1.93	1.77*	1.76		1.82	
	T.2	1.72		1.86	-0.45	1.84	-0.17
7. It takes me a long time to get used to anything new	T.1	1.61	-1.13	1.69		1.69	
	T.2	1.75		1.72	-0.20	1.79	-0.55
8. I'm popular with other people my own age	T.1	2.07		2.07		2.16	
	T.2	2.27	-1.59	1.78	1.77*	2.17	0.00
9. My family usually considers my feelings	T.1	2.12		2.25		2.08	
	T.2	2.00	0.80	2.11	.89	1.95	0.70
10. I give in very easily	T.1	1.99		1.79		1.97	
	T.2	2.12	-0.93	2.04	-1.10	2.03	-0.26
11. My family expects too much of me	T.1	2.08		1.86		1.90	
	T.2	1.44	4.13*	1.79	.30	1.64	1.35
12. It's pretty tough to be me	T.1	1.72		1.59		1.41	
	T.2	1.67	.38	1.74	-0.78	1.59	-1.16

13. Things are all mixed up in my life	T.1	1.67		1.66		1.62	
	T.2	1.44	2.23*	1.62	0.17	1.56	0.30
14. Other people usually follow my ideas	T.1	2.74		2.76		2.72	
	T.2	2.73	.13	2.48	2.12*	2.67	0.39
15. I have a low opinion of myself	T.1	1.73		1.55		1.66	
	T.2	1.56	1.30	1.76	-1.24	1.61	0.34
16. There are many times when I'd like to leave home	T.1	2.11		2.17		1.87	
	T.2	2.00	.73	1.97	1.06	2.03	-0.80
17. I often feel upset about the work that I do	T.1	1.96		1.74		1.85	
	T.2	1.68	2.02*	1.48	1.49	1.90	-0.30
18. I'm as nice looking as most people	T.1	2.22		2.14		2.28	
	T.2	2.23	-0.12	1.82	1.97*	2.23	0.36
19. If I have something to say, I usually say it	T.1	1.89		2.10		2.05	
	T.2	2.20	-2.24*	2.00	.55	2.21	-0.85
20. My family understands me	T.1	2.11		2.32		2.21	
	T.2	2.03	0.61	2.04	1.31	2.05	0.88
21. Most people are better liked than I am	T.1	1.95		1.60		1.76	
	T.2	1.83	1.00	1.60	0.00	1.68	0.65
22. I usually feel as if my family is pushing me	T.1	1.95		1.86		1.92	
	T.2	1.55	2.63*	1.97	-0.53	1.68	1.30
23. I often get discouraged in what I am doing	T.1	1.85		1.66		2.03	
	T.2	1.84	0.13	1.79	-1.16	1.95	0.44
24. Things don't usually bother me	T.1	2.84		2.86		2.72	
	T.2	2.73	0.93	2.76	.52	2.54	0.94

Lower scores reflect higher self-esteem

* $P < .05$

Employed leavers showed a significant increase in self-esteem on five items, three of which were related to family relationships (6, 11, 22). It is difficult to explain exactly why entering employment may be related to enhanced relationships with the parents, as it depends very much on the quality of the relationship prior to leaving school. The content of the items does however suggest that it may be related to parental pressure, which appears to be reduced on entering employment.

School returners showed a significant increase in self-esteem on three items (8, 14, 18) all of which were related to evaluations of relationships with peers.

The problem in interpreting the changes in items is the very general nature of the statements, which makes it difficult to determine the precise nature of the change. Whatever the mechanisms responsible it does appear to be related to entry into employment and the overall increase in self-esteem does appear to be denied those who return to school, or those who enter a tertiary institution. Future research should, perhaps, pay more attention to the exact nature of this change rather than in terms of the global statements used in the present enquiry.

(b) Causal Attributions -

TABLE 25

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE IN ATTRIBUTION SCORES (T.2) BY
SEX AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Source of Variation	df	F	P Value
<u>Main Effects:</u>			
Sex	1	1.99	.161 NS
Employment status	2	3.64	.03 *
<u>Interaction Effects:</u>			
Sex x Employment status	2	.045	.956 NS

The analysis of variance in 'Attribution' scores at the follow-up stage resulted in a significant main effect for employment status ($F = 3.64$, 2 df, $p < .03$) but neither sex nor the interaction was significant.

Univariate analysis of variance indicated that the Attribution scores between school-returners and tertiary students did not differ significantly ($t = .463$, $p < .644$). No significant differences were observed between employed leavers and school returners ($t = 1.72$, $p < .09$) though there was a tendency for employed leavers to have higher scores on the attribution measure, reflecting more internal attribution, than school returners.

A t -test of item means between the two groups indicated there was a significant difference on item 9 and item 12 of the attribution scale with employed leavers conceding more than willingness and perseverance were important in getting a job and contacts were less important than for school returners.

The main effect for attributions at the time of the follow-up was primarily due to the more internal attributions employed leavers made compared with tertiary students ($t= 2.47$, $p<.02$).

The results above tentatively suggest that some changes had occurred in 'attributions' between leaving school and 4½ months later, therefore scores were derived for each group and tested for significant differences. The results are presented in Table 26.

TABLE 26

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, REPEATED MEASURES t -VALUES AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVELS FOR SCHOOL RETURNERS, EMPLOYED LEAVERS AND TERTIARY STUDENTS

Group/time	\bar{x}	SD	t	p Value
<u>School Returners:</u>				
T.1	39.67	3.19	2.56	.02*
T.2	37.40	3.45		
<u>Employed Leavers:</u>				
T.1	39.32	3.60	-.38	.702 N/S
T.2	39.67	6.08		
<u>Tertiary Students:</u>				
T.1	38.97	3.36	1.49	.15 N/S
T.2	36.79	7.20		

Contrary to the findings of Gurney (1981) it was not the employed leavers who changed their attributions but school returners ($t=2.56$, $p<.01$). However, in view of the limited internal consistency of the scale, it was felt necessary to conduct repeated measures t -test on all items, for all groups, and examine the changes in terms of the content of the items rather than on the

internal/external dichotomy on which it was based. It is also evident from Table 26 that there was more variability in scores for employed leavers and tertiary students which has the effect of requiring a greater difference between the two pairs of means for a significant difference to eventuate, as less variance has been explained. The results of the repeated measures t -test for each item are presented in Table 27, following.

Employed leavers showed a significant change only on item 11 ($t = -2.29$, $p < .02$).⁽¹⁾ That is, at the follow-up stage of the research, employed leavers were less willing to concede that knowing influential people is important in securing employment. They were however no more willing to attribute their success to the internal factors of effort, motivation or self-confidence and did not change significantly with regard to any of the external items. There was however a tendency for employed leavers to attribute failure on the labour market more to interview performance ($t = -1.85$, $p < .07$)⁽¹⁾ and a diminished tendency to attribute success to qualifications ($t = 1.68$, $p < .09$). While on most items there was a tendency for employed leavers to favour more internal explanations, no significant changes, other than those mentioned above, were observed. This is contrary to the findings of Gurney (1981) who found that employed leavers, especially males were significantly more likely to make internal attributions.

(1) Negative t -values reflect more internal attribution at the follow-up stage.

TABLE 27

MEANS, REPEATED MEASURES *t*-VALUES AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVELS FOR THE ATTRIBUTION ITEMS, PRIOR TO LEAVING SCHOOL (T.1) AND 4½ MONTHS LATER (T.2):

G R O U P S:		EMPLOYED		SCHOOL			TERTIARY		
Item/ time.	Mean	<i>t</i> - Value	p Value	Mean	<i>t</i> -Value	p Value	Mean	<i>t</i> -Value	p Value
1	3.96			3.86			3.70		
	3.84	1.14	.26	3.72	.85	.40	3.65	.30	.77
2	2.70			2.90			2.86		
	2.68	.09	.93	2.80	.40	.69	2.78	.41	.69
3	3.72			3.83			3.65		
	3.89	-1.17	.25	3.45	2.09	.04	3.68	-.17	.87
4	3.57			3.54			3.35		
	3.61	-.23	.82	3.43	.37	.72	3.38	-.11	.91
5	3.88			3.97			4.06		
	3.93	-.42	.68	3.59	1.65	.11	3.81	1.36	.18
6	3.38			3.28			3.89		
	3.61	-1.38	.17	3.10	.76	.46	3.31	.38	.71
7	2.87			2.66			2.97		
	3.11	-1.85	.07	2.69	-.19	.86	2.86	.58	.56
8	3.56			3.71			3.51		
	3.31	1.68	.09	3.57	1.00	.33	3.23	2.05	.05
9	2.48			2.31			2.24		
	2.56	-.56	.56	2.07	1.37	.18	2.19	.28	.78
10	2.71			2.31			2.57		
	2.63	.50	.62	2.38	-.30	.76	2.81	-1.30	.20
11	3.32			3.69			3.22		
	3.64	-2.29	.02	3.34	1.63	.11	3.43	-1.16	.25
12	3.21			3.52			3.00		
	3.41	-1.28	.21	3.41	.53	.60	3.00	.00	1.00

* Higher scores reflect more internal attribution.

School returners changed significantly on item 3. That is, they were less likely to attribute labour market success to effort and perseverance ($t=2.09, p<.04$). There was a trend, though not statistically significant, that failure was not attributed to a lack of effort ($t=1.37, p<.18$) and success was attributed more to luck ($t= 1.65, p<.11$), and knowing influential people ($t=1.63, p<.11$). School leavers generally tended towards more external explanations for success and failure on the job market but in no cases did the difference reach significance, apart from those mentioned above.

Tertiary students were less likely to attribute success to qualifications ($t=2.05, p<.05$) but on the remaining items their attributions remained remarkably stable, though the general trend was to external explanations.

Many of the students that made up the group of school returners, returned to school for a further year because they were unsuccessful in finding employment over the school vacation. It is possible, though only speculative that as a result of initial failure on the job market the contingency between effort and securing employment was diminished. The same change was observed in three of the six unemployed leavers ⁽¹⁾ in the present enquiry, and Gurney (1981) observed the same effect in the group of unemployed leavers he studied.

(1) See Chapter 6, pages 146 to 147.

However, school returners did not favour internal reasons (effort, interview performance, self-confidence and qualifications) for their failure, rather they tended to attribute failure more to external factors (luck and contacts).

Employed leavers were less likely to attribute success to 'contacts' but they did not attribute success to internal factors (effort, self-confidence and motivation) to any greater extent. Just why they tended to attribute failure more to 'interview performance' and less likely to attribute success to 'qualifications' is puzzling. In fact Gurney (1981) found that it was the unemployed who attributed their lack of success to poor performance in the interview situation. A possible explanation is that with successive attempts to find employment these employed school leavers may have found that in some cases their interview skills and performance weighed against them. While 29 (54.4%) felt interview and job finding skills were an important source of help and advice, rather less 28 (36.8%) cited this as a factor which helped them to find employment. Moreover just over half of the employed leavers surveyed, 34 (53.1%) expressed a desire for more help and advice in this sphere.⁽¹⁾ While not possible to causally relate the two within the research design and, although only speculative, it does go some way towards explaining why employed leavers may have tended to attribute failure more to poor interview performance.

(1) See Chapters 7 and 8, pages 165, 190 and 192

Both employed leavers and tertiary students showed a decreased tendency to attribute success to qualifications. While generally speaking the more highly qualified have increased employment opportunities, qualifications are by no means a universal panacea to ensure continuing employment. Indeed, it is a commonplace belief that increased education may well have the effect of transferring unemployment to higher educational levels. The change observed rather than reflected less internal attribution may be evidence of more awareness of this phenomenon and a realization that other factors such as work attitudes, ability, past experience, interview performance, and personal qualities also play an important role in organizational recruitment policies. It is equally possible that some reasonably well-qualified school-leavers experienced some difficulties in obtaining work after leaving school which perhaps had the effect of diminishing the relationship between qualifications and labour market success. An alternative explanation is that prior to leaving school, qualifications had a moderate item-whole correlation ($r=.15$) with internality, but at the follow-up stage it showed no relationship ($r=.00$). Thus the observed change may be a result of the changed relationship between qualifications and internality over time.

The few changes observed, while not particularly strong, have been noted and tentative explanations generated. The lack of significant change may indicate that transitional experiences for the group of

school-leavers surveyed did not alter the perceived causes for success and failure. A counter intuitive explanation is that the items in the attribution scale used for the present enquiry were not sensitive to changes that may have occurred.

TABLE 28

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE IN WORK INVOLVEMENT (T.2) BY SEX
AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS (1)

Source of Variation	df	F	p Value
<u>Main effects:</u>			
Sex	1	.346	.558 NS
Employment Status	2	6.101	.003*
<u>Interaction effects:</u>			
Sex x employment status	2	1.846	.162 NS

Results of the analysis of variance in work involvement at the follow-up stage of the inquiry, indicated that there was a highly significant main effect for employment status. The scores of males and females did not differ significantly, and neither was the interaction significant.

Scheffe's test indicated that, employed leavers were more work involved than tertiary students ($t = 2.877$, $p < .005$) and school returners ($t = 2.749$, $p < .007$). There was no significant difference between the work involvement scores of school returners and tertiary students ($t = 1.527$, $p < .13$). It will be recalled that,

(1) It was felt unnecessary to enter work involvement scores prior to leaving as a covariate in this analysis as covariates cannot be entered into one-way contrast tests. It was felt that repeated-measures t -test would detect any forthcoming changes.

prior to leaving school tertiary students were less work involved than employed leavers, the same effect was observed in the follow-up data. However, 4½ months later, school returners who did not differ significantly from employed leavers prior to leaving school, were significantly less work involved. In order to examine which groups had changed, repeated measures *t*-test were conducted on a composite work involvement score for each group over time. The results are presented in Table 29.

TABLE 29

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, REPEATED MEASURES *t*-VALUES
AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVELS FOR THE THREE GROUPS ON
WORK-INVOLVEMENT

Group/time	\bar{x}	SD	<i>t</i>	p Value
<u>School Returners:</u>				
T.1	15.48	3.83		
T.2	16.90	4.54	-1.45	.16
<u>Employed Leavers:</u>				
T.1	15.27	3.16	1.46	.15
T.2	14.47	3.65		
<u>Tertiary Students:</u>				
T.1	16.95	4.64	.37	.716
T.2	16.60	3.60		

The results of the repeated measures *t*-test indicated that, the mean work involvement scores for the three groups, did not differ significantly on measures taken prior to leaving school and 4½ months later. However, observation of the reported *t* values and significance levels suggests that there was a trend

towards lower work involvement for school returners ($t = -1.45$, $p < .15$) and to increased involvement for employed leavers ($t = 1.46$, $p < .15$).⁽¹⁾ The combined effect of the changes in these two groups is likely to account for the significant main effect found between school returners and employed leavers at the follow-up stage.

In order to assess where the changes had occurred and to aid in the interpretation, all items were subject to a repeated measures t -test, separately for each of the three groups. The results are presented in Table 30.

The slightly higher work involvement scores of employed leavers at (T.2) was due to a significant change on items 1, 2, 5 and 7, all of which lead to an increase in work involvement. That is, this group of school leavers having been in the work-force for up to 4½ months were more apt to say that even if they won a great deal of money, or if the Unemployment Benefit was very generous, they would still continue to work somewhere, they indicated that they would still do overtime even if they didn't need the money, and that getting/having a job was important to them.

For school returners the slightly lower work involvement score at the follow-up stage was mainly due to a decrease in work involvement on item 3. That is, the group of school returners were less likely to disagree with the statement '*I would not like to be on the Unemployment Benefit when I leave school.*'

(1) Higher work involvement scores reflects less work involvement.

One possible explanation for this change is the finding that many of those returning to school, did so because they were unsuccessful in finding employment over the vacation which may have lead to a realistic appreciation of the situation enveloping them. Overall, however, it did not appear that unsuccessful attempts on the job market had altered their motivation to work. While their mean work involvement scores did decrease slightly, it is a matter of degree rather than magnitude. Whether repeated failure on the job market over a longer period of time would alter work motivation is highly speculative on the basis of the available evidence. However, it is possible that entering employment leads to increased work involvement, which was denied those who returned to school.

The group of tertiary students studied showed no significant changes on any items.

TABLE 30

MEANS, REPEATED MEASURES *t*-VALUES AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVELS FOR THE WORK-INVOLVEMENT ITEMS, PRIOR TO LEAVING SCHOOL (T.1) AND 4½ MONTHS LATER (T.2):

		<u>G R O U P S</u>								
		<u>EMPLOYED</u>			<u>SCHOOL</u>			<u>TERTIARY</u>		
		<u>Mean</u>	<u>t-Value</u>	<u>p Value</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>t-Value</u>	<u>p Value</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>t-Value</u>	<u>p Value</u>
1. Even if I won a great deal of money I would still continue to work somewhere	T.1	1.84			2.00			1.76		
	T.2	1.52	2.59	.01	1.90	.35	.73	1.63	.62	.54
2. Getting a job when I leave school is important to me	T.1	1.39			1.34			1.73		
	T.2	1.20	2.02	.04	1.62	-1.68	.10	1.57	.92	.36
3. I would not like to be on the unemployment Benefit when I leave school	T.1	1.63			1.56			2.11		
	T.2	1.67	-.24	.81	2.19	-3.25	.003	2.13	-.12	.90
4. Other activities are more important to me than work	T.1	2.84			2.76			3.13		
	T.2	3.03	-1.06	.29	2.86	-0.34	.74	3.37	-1.27	.21
5. If the unemployment benefit was really high I would still continue to work somewhere	T.1	1.79			1.69			1.95		
	T.2	1.46	3.13	.002	1.76	-0.42	.68	1.74	1.14	.26
6. I wouldn't like being out of work when I leave school	T.1	1.53			1.54			1.68		
	T.2	1.42	.88	.38	1.61	-0.49	.63	1.63	.28	.78
7. I would only do overtime if I needed the money	T.1	2.78			3.07			2.66		
	T.2	2.38	2.14	.04	3.00	.30	.76	2.74		.72
8. Work would make me feel I was doing something with my life	T.1	1.73			1.69			1.92	-0.36	
	T.2	1.65	.63	.53	1.90	-1.24	.23	1.89	.13	.89

Note: Lower scores reflect higher work involvement.

D. Discussion

No differences were found in self-esteem between employed leavers, school returners or tertiary students, or between males and females, prior to leaving school or 4½ months later. The finding that self-esteem is not predictive of employment status is consistent with the findings of Gurney (1980). However, Gurney (1980) did find that prior to leaving school, females had significantly lower self-esteem than males, the same effect was not observed in the present enquiry. While at odds with the finding of Gurney (1981) it is consistent with the findings of Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) who concluded on the basis of an extensive review of the literature -

"The similarity of the two sexes in self-esteem is remarkably uniform across age levels through college age." (p.153)

Other reviews of the literature (for example Lenney, 1977) have found differences in self-confidence between the sexes in achievement settings, but the differences are dependent on several situational variables - the nature of the tasks - the presence of clarity of performance feedback - and social comparison cues. The self-esteem inventory in the present enquiry was of a general nature rather than dependent on particular cues. Furthermore, while self-esteem and self-confidence are empirically related, they are not the same thing.

While the self-esteem of the groups did not differ significantly at the follow-up stage and while the self-esteem of tertiary students, school returners and

employed leavers did not change significantly, there was a tendency for the self-esteem of employed leavers to increase more markedly in comparison with the other groups. Gurney (1980) found a similar change but only for employed females. This finding tentatively supports the conclusion of Gurney (1980), that leaving school and entering employment is an esteem enhancing experience, and that factors intrinsic to entering employment are responsible. Apart from work providing financial independence it seems likely that other aspects of the work experience are important. Unfortunately, the present enquiry did not address these questions. Future research should investigate why work seems to contribute to personal growth, then we would be in a better position to understand and deal constructively with those who are denied the opportunity to work.

It is also significant to note that the self-esteem of those students who returned to school was not affected, despite that many returned to school for a further year because they were unable to find employment over the summer vacation. Eizenburg and Lazarsfeld (1938) also considered this issue and pointed out that while staying on at school may increase education and consequently improve job prospects, it may also have the undesirable effect of prolonging the period of dependence.

If staying on at school is no more, or no less an esteem enhancing experience, and if unemployment is shown to have negative effects (Stafford, Jackson and Banks, 1980; Haines and Macky, 1980), then staying on at school

may at least improve qualifications and supports the idea of encouraging a longer stay at school to reduce youth unemployment levels.

No significant differences in attribution scores were found between the groups, or between males and females prior to leaving school. The finding that attribution scores were not predictive of employment status is consistent with the findings of Gurney (1981). However, Gurney (1981) did find that females, prior to leaving school were more internal in their orientation than males, such an effect was not observed in the present enquiry.

At the follow-up stage there was a significant main effect for employment status. Though not significant, there was a tendency for school returners to make more external attributions than employed leavers. School returners were less willing to concede that motivation to work and perseverance were important, and believed that contacts and luck were of more importance. Employed leavers were significantly more internal in their orientations than tertiary students. However, contrary to the findings of Gurney (1981), it was not the employed leavers who changed their attributions but school returners, and though not significant there was a tendency for tertiary students to make more external attributions on leaving school.

When the items were subject to a repeated measures t -test very few significant changes had occurred item-wise and these were discussed within the relevant section. However, one interesting trend warrants consideration.

Employed leavers made more internal attributions on eight items (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11 and 12) while for school returners the trend was reversed, they tend towards external explanations on ten items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12), as did tertiary students who moved towards external explanations on seven items (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). While very few of these changes were significant, it does tentatively support the conclusion of Gurney (1981) that finding employment on leaving school enables people to internalize this success. School returners did evidence a significantly greater preference for external explanations on a composite score of the attribution scale, and while mean item scores did not change significantly it should not be overlooked that they tended towards external explanations. Gurney (1981) found school returners, particularly males, tended towards internal explanations for success/failure on the labour market, the reverse trend was the case in this sample.

It may be related to the different composition of the groups across the two studies. Gurney (1981) grouped together both school returners and tertiary students, whereas in the present enquiry they were analyzed separately.

It is also significant that many of the group of high school returners in the present enquiry returned to school for a further year because they were unable to find employment, and it is possible that this experience affected their attributions regarding success and failure on the labour market and tentatively suggest that

they were able to externalize this failure. Attribution theorists have recognized that bias exists in the attributions people make. That is, people tend to take personal responsibility for success but attribute failure to external causes (Heider, 1958, Kelley, 1971, Weiner, 1974; Fitch, 1970, Miller and Ross, 1975). Thus it may be that school returners were utilizing this self-serving attributional bias. Moreover, that they were able to do so may have been functional in ameliorating deleterious effects on self-esteem (Cohn, 1978).

While the operation of such bias may be functional in the short-term, the long-term consequences may be self-fulfilling. That is, while these school returners may have a realistic appreciation of their chances of securing employment in the future, it may also have the undesirable effect of reducing their motivation to look for work - note that the school returners in the present enquiry were less willing to concede that finding employment was dependent on willingness and perseverance - and may lead to a generalized belief that obtaining work is outside the realms of personal control, and hence reduce the incentive to create the conditions necessary to find work.

This interpretation includes the concepts of powerlessness, helplessness or fatalism (see, for example, Zuroff, 1980; Hayes and Nutman, 1981; Wortman and Dintzer, 1978; Abramson et al, 1978). Research on the development of a generalized external locus of control as a result of unemployment is scarce. Overseas studies (Tiffany et al, 1970; O'Brien and Kabanoff, 1979) have

shown an effect, but other researchers have failed to support this contention (Haines and Macky, 1981; Gurney, 1981).

Of course the change in attributions observed in school leavers must be interpreted with caution, due to the poor internal consistency of the attribution measure. It is equally possible however, that a more sensitive instrument may have detected these changes more readily. The finding also casts doubt as to whether returning to school for a further year should necessarily and universally be viewed in a favourable light.

If school returners manage to find employment on leaving school after initially failing, the more external orientations they exhibited may be functional (Hesketh, 1982). If however, they are faced with a long period out of work and if unemployment is shown to be related to a heightened external locus of control, the consequences may not be so straightforward.

Just why tertiary students tended towards more external explanations after leaving school is not possible to ascertain in the context of the present enquiry. It is possible that some tertiary students may have experienced a period of unemployment prior to the commencement of the academic year. A number of tertiary students may have recalled the long wait in a queue at the Labour Department in the hope of obtaining a temporary job through the Student Community Activities programme, and the return visits if no jobs were immediately available. Alternatively, it may be that there is greater exposure at

tertiary institutions, particularly university, to the structural dimensions of the unemployment problem and the tendency towards more external attributions may be reflecting this awareness. Another possible explanation is that tertiary institutions also contribute to 'hidden unemployment' in that, school leavers who do not find employment on leaving school may enrol at universities and polytechnics. Future research should explore these possibilities and their implications.

Another interesting point to note is that tertiary students prior to leaving school had lower work involvement scores than employed leavers, but not school returners. Secondly, male tertiary students had lower work involvement scores than female tertiary students. Both school returners and employed leavers were equally motivated to work.

A plausible explanation for this difference, is that, perhaps entering employment was not an immediate objective for those intending to further their education, and therefore they were less concerned about the importance of work per se, and more immediately concerned with the tangible and intangible benefits of furthering their education. However, when the mean item scores between employed leavers and tertiary students prior to leaving school were compared, only one item showed a significant difference. Tertiary students were significantly less likely than employed leavers to say "*Getting a job when I leave school is important to me*", ($t = 3.95$, $p < .000$). This very significant difference suggests that, perhaps the item was interpreted differently by tertiary students

and that the observed difference between the groups may be partially due to the phrasing of this item.

Moreover, the lower scores of males may have artificially inflated the scores for tertiary students. Differences between male and female tertiary students prior to leaving school were found on three items, with males apparently exhibiting less involvement, only two reached significance. Males were less willing to say that *"Even if I won a great deal of money, I would still continue to work somewhere"*, ($t = 2.34$, $p < .02$) and less likely to agree with the statement *"I would not like to be out of work when I leave school"*, ($t = 1.98$, $p < .05$). The latter item, may have been interpreted differently by male and female tertiary students, and the apparent difference may be an artifact of the item phrasing.

It is the writer's opinion that the initial difference between the groups is not necessarily a real one, but rather due to the ambiguity of these particular items. In the absence of a difference between tertiary students and school returners the lower scores of tertiary students must be a matter of degree rather than magnitude.

Work involvement appeared to be relatively stable over the 4½ month period, but there was a tendency towards increased work involvement for employed leavers and for school returners to be less involved.

It appears that entering employment increases motivation to work. Factors such as, the increased financial independence, learning new skills, mastering

a new environment, achieving an important aim, the security of having work and realizing one's career ambitions may all be important factors which enhanced employed leavers' motivation to work. Whatever the mechanisms responsible it is apparently denied those who return to school. However, returning to school does not appear to unduly affect motivation to work per se, or the acceptability of welfare as an alternative to work, but it does apparently increase the acceptability of welfare payments. It may be that those returning to school, while still regarding work as an integral part of their lives, have come to a realization that they may not be able to find work immediately on leaving school and receiving social welfare payments may ultimately be their only option, and as such, it is perhaps a realistic realignment of values.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS:THE EXPERIENCE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IMMEDIATELY AFTER
LEAVING SCHOOL

In this chapter it is proposed to describe the unemployment experience of six school-leavers. In two cases both male respondents, the impressions gained were based on more limited information as it was not possible to arrange an interview with them after repeated attempts. Because the experience of unemployment was limited for the sample as a whole (4%), the material to be presented here is necessarily of an impressionistic nature, based on questionnaire and interview responses of the six subjects. It does however provide a balance to the material to be presented in Chapter 7 which will indicate a relatively smooth transition for most. For obvious reasons the representativeness and generality of the findings is restricted. Where possible similarities and contrasts are made between subjects, and accounted for by specific data.

This Chapter consists of two parts. The first deals with the case of school-returners and how they may have contributed to the small number of students who were unemployed at the time of the follow-up and the second deals with the experience of those school-leavers who were unemployed immediately after leaving school.

A. The Case of School Returners

It is widely accepted now that significant proportions of young people return to school reluctantly because they are unable to find employment and this contributes significantly to what is termed, 'hidden unemployment'. Those people returning to school at the time of the follow-up investigation were asked their reasons for doing so and the results are shown in Table 31.

TABLE 31

REASONS FOR RETURNING TO SCHOOL (N=29)

	Nos.	% (R)	%/Cases
Qualifications	18	47.4	62.1
Unable to find employment	17	44.7	58.6
Unsure of what to do	3	7.9	10.3
	<u>38</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>131.0</u>

The table above highlights the extent to which 'hidden unemployment' prevails, 58.6% (N=17) of those respondents returning to school gave as a reason, 'unable to find employment'. Qualifications were also mentioned by a large proportion of students (62.1%). It is possible that qualifications were seen as instrumental in gaining employment. It could, further be posited, that, returning to school for a further year is a preferred option to being unemployed. This is due in part to parental pressure and also because some of those

students returning to school anticipated negative consequences associated with being out of work. The following comments made by students illustrate these points.

"Because I had no option as I haven't found a job. My parents won't let me leave school until I have a full-time job. Also I didn't want to go on the dole as it would be boring doing nothing all the time." (subject No.14)

"Because I have not yet got a job and I am trying to further my qualifications so that I can get a job." (subject No.1)

"I wouldn't like to leave school and be on the dole, it's so wasteful, it doesn't interest me. It doesn't look good when you go to an employer and you're not at school but on the dole." (subject No.20)

B. Unemployed School-leavers (1)

(i) Qualifications:

TABLE 32
QUALIFICATIONS HELD

	(No. of subjects)
Subject 1 - University Entrance	5
2 - School Certificate	3
3 - University Entrance	5
4 - University Entrance	2
5 - Sixth Form Certificate	5
6 - University Entrance	5

All those subjects who were unemployed at the time of the follow-up investigation had obtained one or more qualifications prior to leaving school. Five of the six respondents had four years of secondary education and one respondent had three years, thus these respondents as a group would not be termed 'under-achievers' or 'at risk' in a buoyant economy, rather, they are examples of reasonably well-prepared school-leavers caught in the midst of the current economic recession.

(ii) Job History:

Only two subjects (3 and 6) had held part-time jobs, either whilst at school or before being unemployed. Subject 3 worked during the school holidays but there was not an opportunity for a full-time position.

(1) The reader is referred to Appendix H which contains a profile of each unemployed school leaver.

Subject 6 had done and at the time of the interview, was still doing casual work for her father.

(iii) Attempts to find Employment:

TABLE 33

NUMBER OF JOBS APPLIED FOR SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL

Subject 1	...	2	Subject 4	...	20
Subject 2	...	2	Subject 5	...	12
Subject 3	...	10	Subject 6	...	25-30

There was considerable variation between these unemployed school-leavers in the number of jobs they had applied for after leaving school. While some naturally occurring variation is to be expected due to a possible discrepancy between one's aspirations and the availability of such jobs on the labour market, two factors - work motivation and timing of the job search - seemed to account for a considerable portion of this variation.

Cases 1 and 2 stand out in marked contrast to the others. Both these unemployed male school-leavers had apparently made little or no effort to search for work, which appeared to be explicable in terms of their work motivation. Both indicated that they would prefer not to be working and when probed as to why, their responses were:-

"I am unemployed because I am lazy. I don't like the 'alienation' involved in being a member of the workforce."
(subject 1)

"I don't like work." (subject 2)

It might be immediately suspected that this inherent dislike for work had developed as a consequence of being unemployed. This appeared not to be the case, as prior to leaving school both boys had extremely low 'work-involvement' scores (35 and 32 respectively, see Table 34) in comparison with the sample as a whole, and money was high on their priorities as a work outcome. Clearly both these boys did not feel that work was an integral part of their lives, and though it could not be ascertained, it is likely that neither of the boys perceived work as offering a meaningful and personally satisfying existence, work was seen purely as a means for economic gain.

Subjects 3 and 5 both started the job search at a later stage than the remaining two respondents. Subject 5 went away on holiday and began seriously looking for work in mid-February which had probably prolonged her period of unemployment, as she herself noted:-

"By the time I went there, the school-leavers' section had packed in or all the programmes were in progress or winding down." (subject 5)

Subject 3 was for a period voluntarily out of work.

"For the first one and a half months I didn't want a job, I wanted to have a holiday, didn't want to go straight into work. I got serious about looking for a job last month (April)."

The remaining two respondents had been continuously looking for work since leaving school and although they were still unemployed they apparently had an earlier commitment to finding work and this is reflected in the greater number of jobs they had applied for which, theoretically speaking, increased the opportunities available to them, and denied to those who had left the job search to a later stage.

(iv) Unemployment Benefits:

Five of the six respondents were registered with the Labour Department and receiving the Unemployment Benefit.

The sixth respondent, a female (subject 6), did unofficial casual work for her father, earning approximately \$15.00 per week. When questioned as to why she did not apply for the Unemployment Benefit, she replied that both she and her parents felt it was '*degrading*'.

At the time of the interviews another female (subject 5) had subsequently cancelled her benefit at her father's request, he did not like the idea of the Government supporting his daughter. The girl's father paid her the amount she had previously received from the Social Welfare Department, which resulted in respondent 5 feeling that there was more pressure on her to find work.

Most respondents indicated that they were not severely debilitated through a lack of money and that

on the whole the unemployment benefit was adequate relative to their needs, although at times they were restricted.

For example, subject 4 stopped including references, examination results and birth certificate in her applications because it was too costly. A male (subject 3), noted that a lack of money prevented him from following through some of his hobbies and restricted his ambition to travel.

Two other respondents also indicated that a lack of money restricted their activities.

"After leaving school \$50 per week dole is a lot of money, but on the realities of bumming around it is spent quickly."

(subject 2)

"At times I think I'd like to have more money. I'd like to buy more and go out more, but if you buy one thing or travel on the bus it just goes. By Monday you're broke and have to wait until the next cheque." (subject 5)

(v) The Job Search and Experience with Employers:

The four respondents who were actively seeking work utilized a variety of methods to find a job (newspaper, Labour Department Job Board, calling in on Government Departments and Employment Agencies, writing letters to firms and word of mouth). Typically, each of the unemployed respondents who were actively seeking work (subjects 3 to 6) had utilized several of the above mentioned sources which is further evidence of

the lengths to which they were prepared to go to find employment.

Only one girl was somewhat reticent about knocking on doors.

"I don't like to beg for a job, it's too desperate."

(subject 5)

It is possible that she did not have the self-confidence to approach employers directly, as she herself remarked:-

"I'd rather do that sort of thing by telephone."

All four unemployed respondents generally had a favourable impression of employers they came into contact with. Some isolated complaints were that employers did not inform the applicants why they had not been successful in their application. One girl commented:-

"It should be standard practice, then you can do something about it." (subject 4)

Thus it was felt that if there were any personal reasons for being turned down for jobs, the applicant could possibly rectify it in order to improve their chances should similar opportunities arise.

There was also some concern expressed about employers not acknowledging applications.

"I was a bit peeved off that they can't be bothered to acknowledge an answer to their advertisement."

(subject 6)

"I felt disappointed (when application is not acknowledged), you don't know whether to wait for a reply or to apply for another job." (subject 4)

It was realized that employers often had too many applications to acknowledge each one individually, but it was mentioned that even an advertisement in the paper to those applicants who were not successful, to notify them that the position had been filled, would have sufficed.

The manner in which young people are told they hadn't been accepted also emerged as an important consideration, one which requires tact and diplomacy. As one girl put it:-

"There's no feeling for people out there. Employers are old and had no trouble getting a job, it's a terrible let-down." (subject 6)

The main reasons why these unemployed school-leavers felt they had been turned down for jobs in the past were, too much competition, lack of specific experience and qualifications. Only one male mentioned that his dress and appearance (green hair and punk dress) would dissuade employers (subject 2).

While most were confident of their interview style and effectiveness in the interview situation, one female (subject 6) noted that as she applied for an increasing number of jobs and confronted more employers, she gained more confidence in the interview situation.

(vi) Consequences of Unemployment:

TABLE 34
WORK INVOLVEMENT, SELF-ESTEEM AND ATTRIBUTION SCORES
OF THE UNEMPLOYED SCHOOL-LEAVERS PRIOR TO LEAVING
SCHOOL AND 4½ MONTHS LATER

	<u>Prior to leaving school</u>			<u>4½ Months Later</u>		
Subject	Work involve- ment	Self Es- teem	Attri- bu- tions	Work involve- ment	Self Es- teem	Attri- bu- tions.
1	35	48	26	34	51	33
2	32	51	36	33	46	42
3	15	48	42	20	50	42
4	14	43	39	11	44	39
5	18	33	32	14	34	31
6	17	54	35	12	52	32
Sample \bar{x}	16.11	48.78	38.80	13.28	46.79	38.87

(a) Changes in Work Involvement -

The work involvement scores appeared consistent over the four and a half month period. Subject 3's work involvement score decreased on four items, on only one item, 'willingness to do overtime', did the direction change. Subjects 4 to 6 all exhibited an increase in work involvement indicating a greater commitment to work having experienced unemployment.

(b) Changes in Self-Esteem -

The change in self-esteem was negligible, usually a case of one or two points, which suggests that their general self-esteem had not deteriorated since leaving school or as a result of unemployment.

(c) Changes in Causal Attributions -

Finally, the attribution scores had not changed markedly, though cases 1 and 2 became more internal. The changes that occurred are considered in a later section.

(vii) Reactions during the Unemployment Period:

Even this small number of unemployed school-leavers were not homogeneous in their reactions to the onset of unemployment and feelings that developed over the four and a half month period.

Cases 1 and 6 stand out in marked contrast, while the other four cases showed a good deal of similarity in their reactions to being unemployed, and differences were a matter of degree. The experiences of cases 1 and 6 will be presented first, partly because their reactions were so different from the other respondents and secondly, because the impressions gained were based on more limited material. By integrating all the information which was available, a clearer picture was possible.

It was noted earlier that both of these boys rejected work as a way of establishing a rewarding and satisfying existence. It might be expected that if one does not highly value work, the consequences of being out of work would be less severe. This appeared to be the case. These two unemployed young people 'appeared' to enjoy being out of work, and the 'time' and 'freedom' it allowed

them. Subject 1 felt, "no different" as a result of being out of work and subject 2 felt, "free, happy, rich, contented" and did not feel 'bored' or 'depressed' - feelings often associated with those who are out of work. The boy's own words express this well when he wrote:-

"People observing the unemployed tend to think that they always bum around bored, depressed and contemplating suicide. This is untrue. They search for ways out of becoming bored, for example, alcohol, drugs and friends. Only loners become depressed."

(subject 2)

The same person as above was involved in a 'punk' group (ascertained through answers in the questionnaire, 'green hair', type of dress and an anarchy symbol) which presumably provided him with a reference group that had the same values as himself, with which he could identify in terms other than work and which may have helped to attenuate the boredom and frustrations associated with the other unemployed respondents.

It was not possible to ascertain how subject 1 dealt with this experience and why some of the feelings often associated with the unemployed had not developed in his case.

One finding that emerged from the remaining four cases is that being out of work immediately after leaving school was highly upsetting,

especially for the females (subjects 4 to 6). These three respondents when through phases strikingly similar to those observed in the Great Depression and documented by several writers and researchers (Hill, 1978; Hayes and Nutman, 1981; Beales and Lambert, 1973).

(a) The Initial Response -

The three females interviewed all said they had enjoyed being unemployed at first, they treated it like an extended holiday and were at this stage optimistic of their chances of finding employment relatively promptly. The following comments made illustrate this point -

"At first I quite enjoyed being able to stay at home while the rest of the family went off to work."

(subject 5)

"When I was first unemployed I thought I would have no trouble finding a job."

(subject 4)

(b) Later Reactions -

The euphoria associated with such an initial response quickly wore off. At the time of the interview the girls typically described their 'condition' in terms of 'boredom', 'depression' and 'laziness', for example -

"I have become bored and slightly depressed at being at home."

(subject 5)

"I am getting really bored having nothing to do."

(subject 6)

Closely related to the feelings of 'boredom' and 'depression' is a general dissatisfaction because nothing is being accomplished.

"I am annoyed that I haven't got a job and can't progress in my career."

(subject 4)

"The feeling of being useless. You've gone through all those exams to make things easier and still no-one wants you."

(subject 6)

"You begin to feel you're useless and can't do anything."

(subject 5)

It can be seen from Table 34, that no marked changes occurred in the self-esteem of these unemployed after leaving school. However, while their overall attitude towards themselves had not changed, there was some concern expressed over getting depressed about not getting a job, which might trigger periodically low self-images.

"Sometimes I get annoyed at failing to get a job that I'd applied for."

(subject 4)

"After you've applied for lots of jobs and get turned down, you come to think you won't be accepted."

(subject 6)

"You go through patches, if you get notification that you haven't got a job you get bumped back."

(subject 5)

(viii) Effects of Unemployment on use of Leisure Time -

The four unemployed cases interviewed indicated that they were able to fill in their day with a variety of activities, including: helping around the home, reading, watching television, reading papers, looking for jobs, meeting friends, working at a hobby and listening to the radio or records.

While all had contact with people and socialized to the same extent as prior to being unemployed, in some cases, this was restricted to evenings and weekends often because their friends were working or had returned to school. Other reasons mentioned were a lack of money and transport difficulties which restricted leisure activities to some extent. For example:

"I would like to buy some wool to knit, but the money is really tight."

(subject 6)

During the day a lot of time was spent alone, involved in passive activities and there was some indication that their daily activities were showing signs of change. Three respondents indicated that they had become lethargic and had lost the motivation and impetus to be active as the time out of work progressed, which may explain why some developed feelings of 'boredom'.

"You get to a stage where you can't be bothered making an effort. Even getting ready to go into town can be a hassle. I don't think it's being lazy, you just become lethargic."

(subject 5)

"You get lazy, I used to get up early but I got up later and later. I used to go into town and meet my friends but didn't do that after a while." (subject 4)

"Your habits get slovenly. I sleep in pretty late, 12 p.m. sometimes. You get lazy, I dropped my painting, I couldn't be bothered any more." (subject 3)

(ix) Future Expectations -

Most were still optimistic about their chances of getting a job but over the four and a half month period had come to accept that they were unemployed.

"I think that I have become resigned to the fact that for the moment I am unemployed, I still don't like it, however I'm positive that something will turn up." (subject 5)

"You have to be confident, it doesn't help if you worry. You have to keep saying to yourself 'something will come up eventually' - I'm just waiting longer than I'd like to." (subject 4)

With continuing failure to find employment, the effect on one female was more marked. Her future expectations of finding employment had become increasingly negative.

"If things keep going the way they are, I think I might be unemployed for a while."

Moreover, the affects of rejection were less abrupt.

*"At first it wasn't so bad because you still had hope,
then it gets worse and worse until you feel like giving up
but you slowly begin to accept it and the turn-downs don't
hit you so hard."* (subject 6)

A possible explanation for this is that with repeated failure on the job market, the previously existing link between making an effort to get a job and actually securing employment is diminished. For example -

*"I did my schooling. Everyone told me what to do. You
expect it to happen and it doesn't, I've tried so hard."*
(subject 6)

A similar concern was noted by subject 5 -

*"I thought that if you really wanted a job and tried to get
one you would. Well, I've tried, honestly tried, and I'm
still unemployed."* (subject 5)

In apparent support for this notion is the finding that prior to leaving school both subjects 5 and 6 believed that it was mostly true that you can get a job if you look hard enough and often enough (that is, had an internal orientation on item 3 on the Attribution scale). Four and a half months later both felt this was true only occasionally, a shift towards an external attribution. Only two other changes occurred, from being undecided about the role of the Government and luck in finding employment, changed subject 6 towards an external attribution. With regard to the generality of this finding a

change of the same magnitude was apparent for subject 3 who changed from an internal attribution to an indifferent response, but it was in the same direction. It is possible that the change had not occurred to the same extent because he had been looking for work for a shorter period, had put less effort into finding work, and was still highly optimistic about his future expectations of securing employment.

"I know I can go out and get one, I know how to handle an interview. If I really want a job I will get one."

(subject 3)

No corresponding change occurred on item 9 (People who haven't got work don't really want to work, or haven't looked hard enough), which suggests that they are tapping a different attitude, indeed they do not intercorrelate highly ($r=.06$). It is likely therefore that while an individual is aware that they are not unemployed through a lack of effort or motivation, the change that seems to be occurring is one regarding the diminished instrumentality of their actions in finding employment. Furthermore, it suggests that individual factors such as the effort put into the job hunt and length of time unemployed are likely to effect this relationship.

Apart from this item, the attribution scores were remarkably consistent over time. Most did not blame themselves for their predicament, rather, they felt it was a question of the general economic situation being

such that there was too much competition for too few jobs, as opposed to any personal deficiencies and a realization that they were not the only ones affected.

"I realize I'm not the only person." (subject 4)

In contrast, those who had made little or no effort to find employment felt that they were responsible for their situation (subjects 1 and 2). One male (subject 3) who was for some time voluntarily out of work, realized he was in part to blame through a lack of effort.

The realization of respondents that they were not responsible for the situation enveloping them, may go some way towards explaining why there was little change in self-esteem scores over time, as the availability of an external cause has been shown to mitigate the effects of unemployment on self-esteem (Cohn, 1978).

(x) The Role of Support from Friends and Family -

Understanding and supportive relationships between respondents and their parents or friends may also have been an important factor in mitigating the deleterious effects of unemployment on the self-esteem of these school-leavers.

Only two males (subjects 1 and 2) reported a negative response from their parents to their situation, possibly because their work values were at odds with those of their parents.

"They think it is irresponsible and damaging."

(subject 1)

"They were angry at first but later they begin to show concern."

(subject 2)

For one of the respondents leaving home attenuated some of the friction between them.

"Since I have left home they have accepted it a little more."

(subject 2)

There was no such initial reaction from the parents of the remaining four respondents. These respondents indicated that their parents were helpful and supportive from the outset. Their responses to questions regarding the role of their family and friends indicated that such relationships had a buffering and cushioning effect on their self-attitudes. Some illustrative comments are:

"If your parents pressure you it affects how you feel about yourself, it would be depressing and make your confidence drop. They never blamed me. If you feel useless at home, you feel useless elsewhere. It was good to know I had their support. I wasn't treated like I was bumming around."

(subject 4)

"I have never felt inadequate or that being unemployed has changed what I really am. I'm quite lucky in the respect that my friends and family haven't changed towards me because I'm unemployed. I'm still the same inside."

(subject 5)

"They were all very supportive (initially) and still are. Family and family friends are always looking around for me."

(subject 6)

While the respondents on the whole indicated that their parents and friends did not exert any direct pressure on them to find employment, some reacted at times to comments made by parents and family which they felt as pressure, for example:

"They (parents) don't really mind but are now pressurizing me to find work, a bit."

(subject 3)

"My boyfriend is always asking what I'd done - read a book, watched T.V.? 'Are you ever going to get a job?' After a while the word 'job' drives you mad."

(subject 5)

"The seventh formers at school didn't understand, they thought I shouldn't be on the dole, and kept asking if I had a job. I felt like writing it on the noticeboard. I didn't tell people after a while, it became tedious."

(subject 4)

(xi) Stigma -

This heightened sensitivity of the unemployed may be because of the stigma that some respondents felt was associated with the unemployed.

"Being unemployed doesn't affect me until I have to tell someone I'm unemployed. It's admitting the fact to other people and wondering what they think."

(subject 5)

"People think you are lazy. Until I was unemployed myself I didn't realize it wasn't the case." (subject 4)

There was also some indication that being unemployed affected their attitudes towards other unemployed people, and helped to modify some previously held notions respondents had of unemployed people. Furthermore, changing one's assumptions about the unemployed may be another mechanism which the individual employs to protect his or her self-image.

"I must admit that when I was at school I didn't really realize how hard it is to get a job. So I realize that just because you are unemployed doesn't mean that you aren't really trying - slacking on the job." (subject 5)

"My friends used to say to me 'You're not on the dole are you? How degrading.' It's easy to put it down until you're in the situation. I'm not ashamed, I'm not bludging, I am unemployed and looking for a job." (subject 4)

C. Discussion

The effects of unemployment are necessarily complicated. It was shown in the preceding section that an individual's reaction to unemployment must be considered within the context of a number of individual characteristics and situational variables. Given that the number of unemployed school-leavers was extremely small, and the impressionistic nature of the material, it is difficult to draw conclusions as to the generality of the findings and many relationships must be inferred rather than being regarded as causal. The findings are, however, sufficiently varied and interesting to warrant some discussion of them.

The first point of interest to note is that the unemployed leavers in this enquiry had all enjoyed a degree of academic success in their time at school. Thus, it is apparent that those at risk of unemployment on leaving school are no longer confined to the under-achievers. This highlights the necessity to adopt a broad range of strategies to cater for the varying needs of different youth constituencies. Some youth will need only jobs, others will need to acquire marketable skills and some will require personal and vocational counselling.

The finding that financial deprivation was not a primary concern for these young people is perhaps defensible given their relative dependence on parents and the fewer responsibilities and commitments they are likely to have. Compared with their employed peers

unemployed leavers may be 'badly off' and naturally they would like to have more money to buy things and fulfil ambitions, (for example, to travel and go flatting) but actual change in financial circumstances is likely to be less severe than for those who have family and financial commitments.

Jahoda (1979) outlined several important psychological functions of work: work structures time, is socially sanctioned, it involves the expenditure of energy and work is meaningful as it allows an individual to utilize his or her skills and capabilities to obtain rewards. The importance of these 'latent' functions have been stressed elsewhere (Hayes and Nutman, 1981; Tausky and Peidmont, 1968; Morse and Weiss, 1955).

That the psychology of employment and unemployment is complex and involves more than a lack of income, was again demonstrated in the findings of the present study. It was also apparent that attitudes and reactions to unemployment, depended on the meaning of work to the individual.

Previous studies of unemployed youth (Haines and Macky, 1981; Christchurch Employment Advisory Committee, 1979; Miller, 1982) have stressed the importance of work in fulfilling the need to be active. These studies indicated that the most frequent complaint about being unemployed was 'boredom'. The same concerns were expressed by some of the unemployed leavers in the present study. The feeling of 'boredom' develops despite the fact that they were able to fill

in their days with a variety of activities. Moreover, enforced inactivity was shown to decrease motivation to remain active.

This finding provides support for the suggestion that to be totally self-directed over time is difficult for some people (Jahoda, 1979, Swinburne, 1981). The findings of Swinburne, (1981) are relevant here. Swinburne found that the degree of self-direction managers had in their previous jobs was related to their ability to develop a routine and remain active when they were unemployed. Those men who had been used to working to a time-scheduled routine, experienced more difficulty in structuring time and keeping active than those who had more autonomy in structuring their time.

It may be that school-leavers are more vulnerable in this respect. The change from school, where their routine was scheduled for them (for example, lessons and breaks timetabled, and teachers set the lessons) to a situation in which a large amount of discretionary time is available, may result in an inability for school-leavers to impose a structure on their daily activities.

Alternatively however, the lack of significance of these activities compared to the relative importance of work in their self-concept may explain why boredom resulted. For two boys (subjects 1 and 2) work was seen as an alienating evil and they responded to their situation with liberation and presumably, the activities they engaged in were more meaningful than work. This perhaps would explain why feelings of boredom did not develop.

Another concern expressed was feeling 'useless'. This finding is again consistent with other impressionistic accounts of unemployed youth (Haines and Macky, 1981; Christchurch Employment Advisory Committee, 1979) and in adult workers (Marsden and Duff, 1975; Beales and Lambert, 1973). The development of a sense of 'uselessness' can again be traced to the expectations one has of the work role. Jahoda (1979) wrote:

"Both the organisation of work and the product of work implies the interdependence of human beings." (p.313)

Thus work forges a link between the individual's goals and the goals of society. Clearly, work roles are not the only roles which provide an opportunity to be useful and contribute to the community, but, for the majority, the work role is the most central.

Thus, the negative effects of unemployment (boredom, feeling useless, getting depressed about not getting a job) can be seen as a result of a lack of fit between an individual's values and expectations and the reality of the situation. It appeared that the more central that work was in the self-concept and purpose in life, the more severe was the experience of unemployment, thus providing tentative support for the suggestion to that effect in a number of studies (Warr, 1978; Swinburne, 1981; Stafford et al, 1980; Cohn, 1978).

A loss of self-esteem, as a result of unemployment was not observed in the present enquiry. This finding provides support, albeit tentative, for the finding of Gurney (1980) that unemployment did not have a

deleterious effect on self-esteem for some unemployed Australian school-leavers.

Several factors that emerged from the qualitative interviews go some way towards explaining why the self-esteem of these school-leavers was not adversely affected.

Perhaps the most significant factor was the understanding and support these unemployed leavers had from their friends and families. Tangible expressions of support were - financial assistance, and looking for jobs for them. The psychological dimensions of support are not easily quantifiable, but the respondents' statements indicated that their families and friends did not blame them for the situation in which they found themselves, did not pressure them into finding a job, and accepted and respected them as a person rather than in terms of accomplishments. Furthermore, they were able to associate and remain in contact with their friends, and their situation had not denigrated others' opinions of them.

Thus, it is possible that because these individuals were able to perceive that they were cared for and accepted by 'significant others', their self-esteem was maintained in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. While not possible to causally relate the two, it is an intuitively appealing conclusion, given the findings of other studies (for example, Gore, 1978; Swinburne, 1981).

While support and sympathy was the prominent reaction of others, it was also shown that for some, their situation was brought home to them in many subtle ways,

for example, by jokes or deprecatory remarks, and it seems that the stigma of being unemployed is still evident.

Other studies have also reported similar findings (Christchurch Employment Advisory Survey, 1979, Marsden and Duff, 1975; Swinburne, 1981). While these remarks and findings of stigma were at times a source of distress, it did not apparently affect their feelings of self-worth. It was suggested that because they felt they were legitimately unemployed, that is, their transition from school to unemployment, was a result of circumstances beyond their control (too few jobs, economic recession) they were able to deflect labels commonly associated with the unemployed (work shy, dole bludger) from themselves which may have reduced the shame, degradation and loss of self-respect that other studies have reported.

This finding provides limited support for those writers and researchers who claim that if people are able to externalize their explanation of unemployment, self-esteem is maintained (Kabanoff, 1982; Cohn, 1977; O'Brien and Kabanoff, 1979). However, research on the relationship between causal attributions, locus of control, self-esteem and unemployment is not conclusive (Gurney, 1981, Haines and Macky, 1981), therefore it would be a mistake to causally relate the two - the relationship is purely suggestive.

For those actively seeking work, failure was an inherent part of the job search, but its frequency and

intensity of affects varied between individuals and over time. For those who had applied for fewer jobs and who had spent less time actively seeking work, and therefore had been rejected less frequently, future expectations about employment prospects were found to be relatively optimistic.

As the time out of work and the frequency of rejections increases, the intensity of the affective reaction to the rejections becomes less severe and the individual begins to re-evaluate the expectations they have of finding employment. After repeated failure on the labour market, it was apparent that individuals learn that the outcome (finding a job) is independent of their actions (applying for jobs). The implication here is that over time, the individual may learn that responding to the environment is futile and actions go unrewarded, which may eventually reduce the motivation to find work. Gurney (1981) found a similar change for the unemployed he studied, and the present study observed a similar effect for school returners (see page 112).

Thus, a major problem for the unemployed is to remain optimistic about their chances of finding employment, whilst continually being rejected in their search for work. A number of writers (for example, Hayes and Nutman, 1981; Hill, 1978) suggest this change mobilizes a struggle against the possibility which, if unsuccessful, can move the individual rapidly into the next phase of the transition cycle.

Respondents generally had favourable impressions of the employers they came in contact with and generally found they were treated well. Some annoyance and frustration was expressed when employers didn't acknowledge applications, notify them that the position had been filled and did not specify the criteria on which selection was made. While these comments were not prevalent, other studies in the literature (Christchurch Employment Advisory Committee, 1979; Hesketh, 1982) have observed similar complaints.

It is the writer's opinion that employers must assume responsibility for informing applicants as to the outcome of an interview and the criteria that formed the basis of a selection decision. This would be functional because it would enable individuals to discriminate the reasons for failure. That is personal versus impersonal, and perhaps help them to externalize at least some of their failure. Secondly, as Hesketh (1982) points out, if applicants knew the numbers of people who were being turned down, this would help individuals (particularly those who do not have contact with other people) to realise that others are in a similar situation to themselves, and may help to develop a realistic expectation as to the number of jobs they could expect to apply for before being accepted.

CHAPTER 7

RESULTS:THE EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

In this chapter it is proposed to look at the early work experiences of a group of recently employed school-leavers (N=76). The chapter focuses primarily on the employed leavers' perceptions of work, the jobs they entered and sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction within the work environment. The representativeness and generality of the findings is of course restricted by the small sample size and the limited range of questions asked. It must be recognized then that the attitudes displayed by this sample of employed leavers towards work do not necessarily apply to all school-leavers.

Statistical Analysis

Responses to the open-ended questions applicable to this chapter were first coded by the researcher and appropriate categories developed.

The tables presented in this chapter follow one of two forms.

- (i) The first, presents straight frequencies and percentages responding.

- (ii) The open-ended questions were analyzed using SPSS subprogramme Mult-Response. The mult-response procedure outputs the number giving a particular reason in response to the question and calculates percentages based on the total number of cases and responses. The percentage of cases is used in presenting the results.

A. Finding a Job

- (i) Job Changing:

Only 4 (5.3%) of the employed leavers had changed jobs since leaving school, the remaining 94.7% (N=72) had been continuously employed in the position employed in at the time of the follow-up survey. In three of the four job changes, the movement was from a part-time position to full-time employment. The fourth person was employed in two jobs simultaneously.

(ii) Arranging a Job:

TABLE 35
TIME TAKEN TO ARRANGE PRESENT JOB

	Nos.	%
Arranged a job before leaving school	29	35.40
Arranged a job within three weeks of leaving	27	32.90
Arranged a job within six weeks of leaving	11	13.40
Took longer than six weeks to arrange a job	9	11.0
Currently looking for work	6	7.3
	<u>82</u>	<u>100.00</u>

It is of some interest to note that these school-leavers did find employment with almost startling promptness, as seen in Table 35. Over two thirds (68.3%) of the sample of school-leavers had arranged a job before or within three weeks of leaving school. A further eleven (13.4%) had arranged a job within six weeks of leaving school. For nine (11.0%) of these leavers it took more than six weeks to find a job. At the time of the follow-up only six (7.0%) were actively seeking work, that is, were unemployed.

(iii) Jobs Applied for:

TABLE 36
NUMBER OF JOBS APPLIED FOR BEFORE BEING EMPLOYED IN
CURRENT POSITION (INCLUDES THOSE UNEMPLOYED).

	Nos..	%
Only one	28	34
Between two and nine	32	39
Between ten and seventeen	12	15
More than twenty	10	12
	<u>82</u>	<u>100</u>

That 34% of the school-leavers had applied for only one job, reflects on the finding that a high proportion of leavers had obtained a job prior to leaving school. However, for 27% of the school-leavers surveyed, the job hunt was not so straightforward and this is reflected in the greater number of jobs they had applied for.

(iv) Occupations Entered:

TABLE 37
EMPLOYED LEAVERS' OCCUPATIONS

	Nos.	%
Professional/Administration	4	5.3
Clerical	25	32.9
Sales	10	13.2
Service Workers	10	13.2
Agricultural workers	3	4.0
Production workers	6	8.0
Armed Forces	2	2.6
Survey Draughting Cadet	2	2.6
<u>Apprenticeships -</u>		
Horticultural	2	2.6
Production	3	4.0
Trade	6	8.0
Mechanical	2	1.3
Technical	1	1.3
	76	(1)

Half (50.1%) of the school-leavers were either trainee apprentices or clerical workers. A further 26.4% were sales persons (for example, check-out operators, shop assistants), or service workers (for example, nurse aid, waiter/waitress, child-care). Because no national figures are available for the actual destinations of school-leavers, it is not possible to compare the occupations entered to ascertain the representativeness of these findings in relation to school-leavers as a whole.

(1) Percentages do not total 100 because of rounding.

The proportion of school-leavers taking up apprenticeships is, however, similar to the national average. Roper (1981) reports that in 1978 apprenticeships attracted 12.6% of all school-leavers. A similar proportion was obtained in the present enquiry. The range of occupations entered suggests that an adequate coverage of school-leavers' destinations was obtained.

(v) Reasons for Obtaining Employment:

	Nos.	%(R)	%/Cases
Contacts	21	15.4	27.6
Qualifications and experience	39	28.7	51.3
Interview preparation	28	20.6	36.8
Positive attitude to work	39	28.7	51.3
Other reasons	9	6.6	11.8
	<u>136</u>	<u>100.0</u>	

No clear pattern emerged in response to this question. Four factors seem to contribute to these school-leavers' reasons for success on the job market. The importance placed on contacts (27.6%) reflects once again the major role which friends and relatives play in helping school-leavers obtain their first job. Relevant qualifications and

part-time experience whilst at school, were also seen as contributing to respondents' success in obtaining employment (51.3%). Preparation for and performance in the interview situation also played a significant role (36.8%). A variety of work attitudes and personal qualities which respondents perceived as salient to employers (such as manners, reliability, appearance, willingness to work hard and learn, initiative and ability to communicate), also featured prominently in response to this question (51.3%).

B. Perceptions of Work

(i) Reasons for Job Choice:

TABLE 39
REASONS OF EMPLOYED LEAVERS
FOR TAKING THEIR PRESENT JOB

	Nos.	%(R)	%/Cases
It was the type of job sought	52	44.4	68.42
Job gained through knowing someone	7	6.0	9.21
Educational and training prospects	13	11.1	17.11
Extrinsic rewards/factors associated with working	17	14.6	22.37
Security/Better than being unemployed	28	23.9	36.84
	<u>117</u>	<u>100.0</u>	

The prime motivation for this group of young people taking their present job was an expressed

interest in the type of work to be undertaken (68.42%) and a preference to work as opposed to being a recipient of welfare payments (36.84%). Smaller numbers of employed leavers mentioned the opportunity to learn and train was an important consideration (17.1%). Having contacts played a minimal motivation in job choice (9.2%). It is also interesting to note that very few employed leavers (22.3%) considered extrinsic rewards or factors associated with the job as an important motivation for taking it.

(ii) The Attractions of being at Work:

TABLE 40
WHAT SCHOOL-LEAVERS LIKED MOST ABOUT WORKING (N=76)

	Nos.	%(R)	%/Cases
Money	39	28.9	51.3
Independence	30	22.2	39.5
Interpersonal contact	18	13.3	23.7
Intrinsic factors associated with working	33	24.4	43.4
Security	10	7.4	13.2
Other	5	3.7	6.6
	<u>135</u>	<u>100.0</u>	

Four major factors emerged in respondents' evaluations of what was liked most about working. Money was mentioned most often by respondents, 51.3% felt this was an important job criterion. This was closely followed by the importance of the 'intrinsic' aspects of work (such as, a sense of responsibility,

some degree of autonomy in work matters, doing something that is interesting and personally involving, and variety in work content), mentioned by 43.4% of employed leavers. Thirtynine point five percent mentioned that the independence which they gained as a result of entering the workforce was also important. The opportunity for interpersonal contact (23.7%), and job security (13.2%) were mentioned relatively infrequently in comparison.

While money is certainly valued by this sample of school-leavers, it was seldom mentioned as a sole work outcome. The importance of personally satisfying and rewarding work tasks also featured prominently.

(iii) The Counter-attractions of Work:

TABLE 41
FACTORS SCHOOL-LEAVERS LIKED LEAST ABOUT WORKING

	Nos.	% (%)	%/Cases
Lack of intrinsic rewards	15	16.7	21.1
The hours	19	21.1	26.8
Poor staff relationships	8	8.9	11.3
Less people your own age	8	8.9	11.3
Less free time	27	30.0	38.0
Other	13	14.4	18.3
	<u>90</u>	<u>100.0</u>	

While the majority of this sample of school-leavers expressed a high degree of satisfaction with

their job and generally liked the type of work (see Tables 42 and 43), 21.1% felt that the nature of their work was such that it did not satisfy their 'higher-order needs'. This small number of respondents disliked the routine nature of their work, felt that their work was not sufficiently interesting or varied and it did not utilize their skills and abilities to the fullest. Some dissatisfaction with the hours they worked was also apparent (26.8%). In some cases this was working particular days, for example, Friday and Saturday nights, for others the working day was considerably longer than that experienced at school which was tiring for some. Few respondents mentioned that working with people they didn't get on with or getting a 'hard time' from other workers was a negative aspect of working (11.3%). A small number of young people mentioned that they missed having people of their own age in the work environment (11.3%).

The most significant factor mentioned in response to this question was a lack of free time for sporting, cultural and social activities (38%). While respondents on the whole valued work as evidenced by their mean work involvement scores (see page 73), leisure activities were also important, and this finding is perhaps an indication of the crucial role leisure has in forming one's self-concept in modern society. Alternatively, it could be an indication of the

adjustments that have to be made upon leaving school and entering the workforce. A movement from a situation in which a great deal of discretionary time is available to pursue leisure activities, to a situation which is such that leisure activities are restricted due to the demands of work.

(iv) Possible Reasons for Leaving:

TABLE 42
POSSIBLE REASONS FOR EMPLOYED LEAVERS CHANGING JOBS
(N=74)

	Nos.	% (R)	%/Cases
Extrinsic characteristics	15	14.9	20.3
Lack of intrinsic rewards	28	27.7	37.8
Better training/promotional prospects	22	21.8	29.7
Interpersonal relationships	12	11.9	16.2
Personal reasons	5	5.0	6.8
Nothing	19	18.8	25.7
	<u>101</u>	<u>100.0</u>	

Only 25.7% of the employed leavers surveyed indicated that they would not leave their job for any reason, or only through 'redundancy' or 'death'. The majority of the sample gave a variety of reasons why they might change jobs. A small number (20.3%) would leave for better remuneration and working conditions. It is interesting to note

that money featured so infrequently that it was not possible to code it separately. Others would seek a job that gave them more autonomy, responsibility and more varied work (38.8%). Better training and promotional prospects elsewhere was also an important consideration (29.7%). Fewer respondents mentioned that an unpleasant atmosphere or unsatisfactory staff relationships would facilitate a decision to move to another job (16.2%). Finally, personal reasons such as an overseas trip, or ill health, were mentioned infrequently (6.8%).

It could be concluded that very few people have not considered changing their job for a variety of reasons. The pursuit of meaningful and personally satisfying work with opportunities for learning and advancement were the major considerations reflected in the responses.

C. Job Satisfaction

TABLE 43
EMPLOYED LEAVERS' SATISFACTION WITH THEIR JOB

	Nos.	%
Very satisfied	45	59.3
Satisfied	21	27.6
Neither satisfied/dissatisfied	9	11.8
Dissatisfied	0	-
Very Dissatisfied	1	1.3
	<u>76</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Table 43 reflects the high level of satisfaction exhibited by respondents in the survey, 87% were either very satisfied, or satisfied with their job.

TABLE 44
EMPLOYED LEAVERS' LIKING FOR THEIR JOB

	Nos.	%
I like it a lot	53	69.80
I like it a little	14	18.50
I don't like or dislike it	4	5.20
I don't like it much	4	5.20
I hate it	1	1.30
	<u>76</u>	<u>100.00</u>

It is clear from Table 44 that the majority (88.3%) either liked their job a lot or a little. Only 5.20% were indifferent about their job, and 6.7% exhibited a dislike for their job.

D. Discussion

For the employed leavers in the present enquiry, work appeared to be a satisfying and enjoyable experience. Only 13.1% were indifferent or dissatisfied with their jobs and a similar proportion (16.7%) did not like their jobs. This finding is consistent with similar studies of adolescents in this country (McEwan, 1972; Cameron and Livingstone, 1979; Haines and Macky, 1981) and overseas (Maizels, 1970; Carter, 1966; Eppel, 1953; Musgrove, 1966).

The relative ease with which this sample of school leavers found their jobs, that the majority had entered the occupations of their choice, and the novelty and newness of the situation, all seem to be salient factors which may have contributed to the high degree of liking and satisfaction these school-leavers exhibited towards their first jobs.

In general, mainly favourable references were made to specific aspects of the work and the job, which may be a result of experiencing something new which is considered to be interesting and satisfying. (Maizels, 1970; McEwan, 1972; Handyside, 1961). However, sufficient unfavourable responses were forthcoming indicating that not everyone viewed the work environment in high stead just because it was a new experience. It could also be that people adjust to jobs which they have and base their satisfaction on the particular attributes of the job (Morse and Weiss, 1955). While people may not vary in their overall satisfaction they may vary in their reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Aspects of working and the job that were found to be most enjoyable were: the money, the nature of the work tasks, interpersonal contact and independence. Money was mentioned more frequently in this sample of school-leavers than in the adolescents studied by Connell (1975), but the emphasis placed on interesting and personally satisfying work tasks was similar. The relatively equal emphasis placed on both provides support for those writers and researchers who claim that increasingly, work is being valued not only as a means

of economic survival, but as a way of organizing life in some psychologically meaningful and need fulfilling way, with opportunities to use valued skills and abilities (Taylor and Thompson, 1976; Yankelovich, 1974; Cherrington, 1977, 1979; Strauss, 1974).

Specific aspects of the employed leavers jobs, and working, did however, arouse some dissatisfaction. Very few leavers expressed unsatisfactory relationships with the boss and co-workers (11.3%). This finding appears to be consistent with the finding of McEwan (1972) who found that no more than 10% made unfavourable references regarding relationships with the boss.

Some dissatisfaction was expressed with the hours worked (26.8%). This finding is at odds with the finding of McEwan, (1972) who found that no more than 5% of the adolescents he studied were unhappy with the hours they worked. It is also at odds with the findings of Cameron and Livingstone (1979) that only 8% expressed dissatisfaction with the hours.

Two factors may account for this inconsistency in findings. Firstly, in the present study the finding was based on an open-ended question and did not reflect degrees of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which was the base of previously mentioned studies, therefore, there is an inherent difficulty in making a direct comparison between the studies.

Perhaps a more logical and defensible interpretation is that the school-leavers in the present study were still adjusting to the restrictions that working placed on their discretionary time.

The adolescents in the previously mentioned studies had been in the workforce from six to twelve months, whereas in the present study it was only up to 4½ months. As school-leavers spend more time in the work situation they may well report less dissatisfaction with the long hours and adapt to the demands that work places on their time. Only a small number of school-leavers (11.3%) missed having people their own age in the work environment, but it was apparent that a negative aspect of working was the limited opportunity to interact with their peers outside working hours, in leisure, sporting and cultural spheres, which adds strength to the interpretation made above.

A small number of the school-leavers studied were unhappy with the nature of their work tasks (21.1%). Whether this was the result of an uninformed choice or unrealistic expectations, is not possible to reconcile. One way of overcoming dissatisfaction with a particular job or occupation is to seek out other possible opportunities. Only a quarter (25.7%) of the employed leavers questioned, regarded their first job as representing a stable work orientation.

In the remaining cases a decision to leave their current position mostly represented positive attempts to find a job where the work tasks were more varied, interesting and rewarding with increased opportunities to learn new skills and advancement prospects (67.5%). About one-third of the responses (35.5%) could be regarded as extrinsic reasons, such as poor working conditions, difficulties with management and money.

For the majority of these young workers, then, job changing should perhaps be seen as a natural process, to be encouraged rather than deplored. Clearly, adolescents must experiment with the range of possibilities open to them in an attempt to find out what work they are most suited to.

An alternative explanation for the frequency with which individuals report that they would possibly change jobs, is faulty guidance machinery. If an individual is to develop a commitment to an occupation, he or she must be first equipped with the knowledge of the sort of work involved, how the occupation is entered, the type of qualifications and training required, and how to go about finding it in a systematic manner. If the job information possessed by school-leavers is insufficient, and the evidence does suggest that this is so,⁽¹⁾ then school leavers may find themselves in a position that does not meet their expectations and values. Of course in the current labour market conditions, it is not always possible to find the best fit, between an individual's values and the opportunities available to fulfil them, and this is why vocational guidance must also include information about options, if school-leavers are to make a sound and rational choice.

It can only be inferred that the majority of the school-leavers had obtained jobs through their own efforts, however, 27% had the help of parents, friend,

(1) See Chapter 8

relative or an acquaintance - which again stresses the importance of contacts in helping school-leavers to find their first jobs. Although the percentages vary, similar findings have been reported elsewhere (Cameron and Livingstone, 1979; McEwan, 1972; Moor, 1976; Haines and Macky, 1981).

CHAPTER 8

RESULTS:SCHOOL GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

This chapter examines the use of vocational counselling by the group of school-leavers surveyed. Areas explored are: the extent to which these secondary school students received advice regarding their plans on leaving school, either on an individual or group basis; whether any bias exists in the use of school vocational guidance facilities; the nature of the help and advice received prior to leaving school; aspects that employed and unemployed leavers later found to be of help in making the school to work/unemployment transition; and to pinpoint areas in which the information and advice was found to be inadequate. The chapter concludes with a general discussion of the findings and their relationship to existing literature.

Statistical Analysis

Three forms of data analyses were used to process the information obtained for this Chapter.

- (i) Frequency tables, including numbers and percentages responding to a question.
- (ii) The open-ended questions were again analyzed using the Mult-response procedure. The percentage of cases is used when reported in the text.
- (iii) Where applicable nominal level data were analyzed for significant differences using the Chi-square procedure. Frequencies and percentages within and between groups are presented in table form with the accompanying Chi-square value, degrees of freedom and significance level.

A. Use of Counselling and Guidance

TABLE 45

EXTENT TO WHICH GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES ARE
UTILIZED BY STUDENTS WHILST STILL AT SCHOOL

Seen Counsellor/Career's Adviser Individually

	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
Yes	142	69.96
No	58	28.57
No Response	3	1.47
	<u>203</u>	<u>100.00</u>

Seen Counsellor/Career's Adviser as a Group

Yes	108	53.20
No	93	45.81
No Response	2	.99
	<u>203</u>	<u>100.00</u>

Just over two thirds of the sample (69.96%) had seen the school counsellor for an individual interview prior to leaving school, while 28.57% had not. Rather less (53.20%) had experienced visits by the school counsellor to their classes and almost half (45.81%) had not.

It could be concluded that the majority of students surveyed had experienced some form of counselling prior to leaving school.

B. Perceptions of the Help and Advice Received

TABLE 46
FACTORS LEADING TO A POSITIVE SELF-EVALUATION
OF THE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW (N=117)

	Nos.	%(R)	%/Cases
Information and advice	94	65.3	80.3
Applying for jobs	29	20.1	24.8
Interview or Application arranged	4	2.8	3.4
Personal qualities of counsellor	10	6.9	8.5
Work experience	6	4.2	5.1
Study skills	1	0.7	0.9
	144	100.0	

Table 46 shows that the main reasons why this group of school-leavers (N=117) found the counsellor or career's adviser to be of some assistance were: the information and advice given about jobs (for example, job field suggestions, personal and academic requirements, who to approach for further information regarding the type of work and advice regarding career decisions) and skills required for effective job hunting (such as, interview techniques, the different methods of job finding, how to enrol at the Labour Department, and letters of application). A smaller number of respondents noted that a willingness on the part of the counsellor to listen in a non-threatening or non-judgemental manner, and the opportunity to experience different work environments contributed towards a favourable interview outcome.

TABLE 47
FACTORS LEADING TO A NEGATIVE SELF-EVALUATION OF THE
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW
 (N=31)

	Nos.	% (R)	%/Cases
No help at all	10	30.3	32.3
Information lacking or not up to date	5	15.2	16.1
Only leaflets provided	3	9.1	9.7
Unfavourable counsellor qualities	15	45.5	48.4
	33	100.0	

Table 47 shows the factors that contributed to a negative self-evaluation of interview outcomes for a small number of respondents. These results must be interpreted with caution due to the small number of cases, N=31, finding the counsellor to be of little help.

The major reason why this small number of respondents found the counsellor to be of little help was a lack of enthusiasm and interest on the part of the counsellor. Respondents felt the counsellor was impersonal and unresponsive to their needs. Other factors contributing to a negative evaluation were that, the counsellor only handed out leaflets without any corresponding discussion of the contents, a lack of information required, and that the information provided was subsequently found to be out of date.

On the whole students had favourable impressions of their visits to the counsellor, very few were critical of the help they received at the time.

TABLE 48

REASONS WHY GROUP COUNSELLING SESSIONS
WERE HELPFUL
 (N=76)

	Nos	% (R)	%/Cases
Job information and advice	47	52.2	61.8
Ideas of others helpful	10	11.1	13.2
Applying for jobs	18	20.0	23.7
Discussion of employment situation	8	8.9	10.5
Examination techniques	7	7.8	9.2
	90	100.0	

As with the individual counselling sessions the major factor contributing to effective group counselling was the job information and advice provided, and the learning of skills required for effective job-seeking. Reasons mentioned less frequently were that the ideas of others helped to broaden their own perspectives of the job scene, and that discussion of the unemployment situation was useful in establishing realistic expectations.

TABLE 49

REASONS WHY GROUP COUNSELLING INEFFECTUAL
 (N=30)

	Nos	% (R)	%/Cases
Too general	15	46.9	50.0
Uninformative	9	28.1	30.0
Not applicable	5	15.6	16.6
Lack of direction	3	9.4	10.0

The most often mentioned reason why group counselling was seen as offering little assistance was that the discussion was too general. A potential explanation for this, is that in the group situation it is not

possible for the counsellor to be sensitive to the needs of all students and discuss in depth an individual's particular vocational problem. A small number of respondents indicated that the discussion was, uninformative, added little to their own body of knowledge, was not applicable, and that the session/s had no direction.

As with the individual counselling, students generally had favourable attitudes towards the outcome of group based counselling, only a small number of students (N=30) were critical of the benefits arising from group counselling which makes the writer hesitant about drawing any unequivocal decisions on this point.

C. Use of Counselling by Sexes and Years spent at Secondary School

Because it has been implied elsewhere that certain groups of the school population are more likely to benefit from, vocational counselling and guidance provided in secondary schools, use of both individual and group counselling was tested for differences in use by sex of respondent and number of years spent at secondary school (the index being form currently enrolled in).

TABLE 50
DIFFERENCES IN USE OF COUNSELLING BY SEX OF RESPONDENTS

	Males	Females	
Been for an individual interview	52	90	142
	36.6%	63.4%	
	57.8%	81.8%	
Not been for an individual interview	38	20	58
	65.5%	34.5%	
	42.2%	18.2%	
	90	110	

Chi-sq= 12.75 1(df), $p < .0004$

Of those who had seen the counsellor for an individual interview, 36.6% were males and 63.4% were females. Conversely, of those who had not seen the counsellor individually prior to leaving school, 65.5% were males and 34.5% were females. Thus, it appears that females are more likely to have visited the counsellor for an individual interview prior to leaving school. This difference becomes even more apparent when one looks at the column percentages, that is, 57.7% of males said they had seen the counsellor for an individual interview prior to leaving school, while 42.2% had not taken advantage of this opportunity. For females the trend is reversed, that is, 81.8% had made use of this facility and only 18.2% had not.

This very significant difference indicates that females are more likely than males to have seen the counsellor for an individual interview prior to leaving school.

TABLE 51

DIFFERENCES IN USE OF INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING BY YEARS
SPENT AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

	Form		
	5th	6th	7th
Been for an individual interview	32	78	32
	22.5%	54.9%	22.5%
	57.1%	75.0%	80.0%
Not seen the counsellor for an interview	24	26	8
	41.4%	44.8%	13.8%
	42.9%	25.0%	20.0%
	56	104	40
Chi sq = 7.604, 2(df), p < .002			

The table above indicates that of those who had seen the counsellor individually 22.5% were fifth formers, 54.9% were in the sixth form and 22.4% were in the seventh form. At face value it appears that sixth formers are more likely to have seen the counsellor for an individual interview than both fifth and seventh formers, however it must be kept in mind that the sample consisted of more sixth formers than any other form. However, examination of the column percentages strengthens the validity of this apparent difference in the use of vocational counselling. Of fifth formers, 57.1% had seen the counsellor and 42.9% had not. For the sixth formers 75.0% had seen the counsellor individually and 25.0% had not. Finally, 80.0% of seventh formers had seen the counsellor for the individual interview and 20.0% had not taken advantage of this opportunity.

This result suggests that fifth formers are significantly less likely to have had contact with the counsellor individually prior to leaving secondary school than both sixth and seventh formers.

TABLE 52
VARIATIONS IN GROUP COUNSELLING BY SEX OF RESPONDENT

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	
Experienced group counselling	55	53	108
	50.9%	49.1%	
	60.4%	48.2%	
Not experienced group counselling	36	57	93
	38.7%	61.3%	
	39.6%	51.8%	
	91	110	

Chi-sq = 3.09 1(df), p < .08

The table above shows that of those who had experienced some form of group counselling 50.9% were males and 49.1% were females. Conversely, of those who had not experienced this form of counselling 38.7% were males and 61.3% were females. Of males 60.4% had experienced group counselling and 39.6% had not. Of the females, 48.2% had experienced vocational counselling as a group and 51.8% had not.

While this result did not reach the usually accepted level of significance it indicates a trend toward males experiencing group counselling significantly more than females. This result may, however, be an artifact of the sample. As all the schools surveyed were co-educational it is not likely that there would be any sex difference in organized group sessions. It may be that the males surveyed came from classes where group counselling had been experienced, while this may not have been the case for females.

TABLE 53

RECEIPT OF GROUP COUNSELLING BY YEARS SPENT AT
SECONDARY SCHOOL

	5th	Form 6th	7th	
Seen counsellor as a group	34	47	27	108
	31.5%	43.5%	25.0%	
	61.8%	45.2%	64.3%	
Not experienced group counselling	21	57	15	93
	22.6%	61.3%	16.1%	
	38.2%	54.8%	35.7%	
	55	104	42	

Chi sq = 6.38 2(df) p < .04

Of those who had experienced some form of group counselling 31.5% were in the fifth form, 43.5% in the sixth form and 25.0% were in the seventh form. Conversely, 22.6% of fifth formers, 61.3% of sixth formers and 16.1% of seventh formers had not experienced this form of counselling. At this point it appears that both fifth and seventh formers are more likely to have experienced group counselling than sixth formers. Again the significance of this difference becomes clearer when looking at the column percentages. Here one sees that of the fifth formers 61.8% had experienced some form of group counselling, while 38.2% had not. Of the sixth formers 45.2% had had some group counselling and 54.8% had not. Of the seventh formers 64.3% had had the counsellor to their class while 35.7% had not.

In conclusion, it appears that fifth and seventh formers are significantly more likely to experience group counselling prior to leaving school than sixth formers.

D. Later Perceptions of the Help and Advice Received

Despite that the majority of school leavers surveyed had seen the careers adviser or guidance counsellor either individually or as a group prior to leaving school and had generally found these visits useful at the time, many school-leavers who entered full-time employment or who were unemployed were subsequently

critical of the range and depth of the guidance given in preparation for entering the workforce. That is, of those school-leavers subsequently in full-time employment or unemployed, 46 (56.8%) felt that school had prepared them adequately for their experiences since leaving school, while 35 (43.2%) were critical of the extent to which school prepared them for their subsequent experiences.

To establish in what ways school-leavers felt school prepared them, respondents were asked, 'In what ways do you think school prepared you for your experiences since leaving?', or 'In what ways do you think schools could be improved to meet the needs of school-leavers?'.

TABLE 54

ASPECTS OF HELP AND ADVICE PERCEIVED AS BEING OF
ASSISTANCE IN PREPARATION TO ENTER THE WORKFORCE (N=53)

	Nos.	% (R)	%/Cases
Relating to people	14	17.9%	26.4%
Applying for jobs	29	37.2%	54.7%
Qualifications/study skills	9	11.5%	17.0%
To be self-motivated	9	11.5%	17.0%
Vocational decisions	7	0.9%	13.2%
General	10	12.8%	18.9%

The most often mentioned reason in response to this question was the receipt of skills required for job finding, such as, interview techniques, letters of application, and different methods of job finding, 54.7% of respondents mentioned this as a reason. The opportunity to mix with, relate to and co-operate with a wide range of people at school was also helpful to this group of school-leavers. A small number of students indicated that qualifications and some help and preparation for sitting examinations was a useful outcome of their schooling. Other respondents mentioned that teachers and related school personnel stressed the importance for students to be self-motivated, that is, in order to find a job it was necessary to make a personal effort and not to be disappointed if turned down on occasions.

Very few respondents mentioned that schools helped them to decide on their occupations. This result is not surprising given the important role that parents and family have been found to play (see Table 38).

Furthermore, while many school-leavers mentioned that guidance counselling had given them advice and information on jobs, it may be that in the long-run occupational choice may be determined by labour market conditions. The fact that quite a number of respondents indicated that they had taken their present job merely because it was the only successful attempt supports this contention. (see Table 39).

TABLE 55

RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOW SCHOOL COULD BE
IMPROVED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF SCHOOL-LEAVERS ON
ENTRY TO THE WORKFORCE (N=64)

	Nos.	%(R)	%/Cases
Preparation to apply for jobs	34	34.0	53.1
More information and advice on jobs	21	21.0	32.8
Work experience	17	17.0	26.6
More guidance available	23	23.0	35.9
Independence and social skills	5	5.0	7.8

Those employed students who felt that school had prepared them inadequately for entry into employment, gave a variety of ways as to how school and guidance counselling could do more to ease the transition, 53% would have liked to have had more training in skills, such as: how to find and apply for jobs, writing letters of application, and how to behave in an interview; a further 33% would welcome receipt of more detailed and accurate information of various jobs and training opportunities. The emphasis was on more in-depth discussion of jobs and their requirements rather than the handing out of leaflets. A number of respondents also indicated that they should be encouraged to have more than one occupational choice in the event of disappointment. Seventeen leavers (27%) mentioned that some or more direct contact with organisations and work prior to leaving school would have given them a greater understanding of the mechanics of work and helped them choose an occupation more relevant to their interests and abilities.

Twentythree leavers (36%) indicated that guidance should begin at an earlier stage, and more time should be devoted to it. It was often mentioned that pre-vocational skills and information should be incorporated into the school curriculum.

TABLE 56

THOSE PEOPLE SEEN BY RESPONDENTS AS MOST RESPONSIBLE
OR WHO BEST PREPARED THEM FOR OBTAINING A JOB (N=75).

	Nos.	%(R)	%/Cases
Self	18	17.0	24.0
Family - parents	32	30.2	42.7
School and teachers	29	27.4	38.7
Vocational guidance	26	24.5	34.7
All inclusive	1	0.9	1.3

The above table shows the important role of parents and the family in preparing young people for entry into the work-force and occupational decision-making. While many students were critical of the amount of help and guidance they received at school, many still found this a useful source of information and advice in preparing them for the school-to-work transition.

E. Use of Job Advice and Placement Services Outside of School.

Job advice and placement services outside of school are an important link in the 'network' of guidance services available to young people to ease their entry into the workforce, and are often cited as offering support for those out of work. In order to assess the

extent to which these support and placement services are utilised by school-leavers, respondents were asked whether they had been to any, which ones, and how useful they found the visits to be.

Only thirtyfour (41.5%) had been to one or more of the available employment agencies and guidance services since leaving school, while fortyeight (58.5%) had not. One possible explanation why these agencies were not visited as frequently as one might expect is that a sizeable proportion of these young people had secured employment prior to leaving school, and thus had either seen them while still at school or had no need to visit them. Alternatively, they may not have been aware of their existence.

In order to test this explanation, time taken to obtain employment was cross-tabulated with use of employment agencies. Although the cell frequencies were too small for significance testing it is interesting to note that only 27.6% of those who had secured employment before leaving school had subsequently been to see any employment agency, that is, 72.4% had not been to any employment agency after leaving school.

TABLE 57

EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES UTILIZED

	Nos.	%(R)	%/Cases
Department of Labour	25	52.1	73.5
Private Employment Agencies	12	25.0	35.3
Vocational Guidance	4	8.3	11.8
State Departments	7	14.6	20.6
(N=34)	48	100	

The most frequently used employment agency was the Labour Department, followed by private employment agencies.. Both State Departments and the Vocational Guidance Centre were used relatively infrequently.

Because only a small number of respondents (N=34) had utilized one or a combination of the above mentioned guidance and placement services, it was felt unwarranted to report their responses as any conclusions would be so unrepresentative that they would be misleading as to the contribution these agencies make in providing a network of guidance and counselling for the community.

F. Discussion

The findings of the present study have shown that the majority of students had seen the counsellor prior to leaving school on either an individual or group basis. However, just over a quarter of students (28.57%) had not seen the guidance counsellor or careers adviser individually and almost half (48.8%) had not had a visit by the guidance counsellor or careers adviser to their class. Thus, it is apparent that, despite recent efforts to extend the availability of vocational guidance for secondary school students, these facilities are still not reaching all students in one form or another. In the absence of similar enquiries in this country it is not possible to evaluate the generality of the findings. The findings are consistent with those of

Colledge et al, (1978) who reported that between 40% and 63% of different youth constituencies had not received vocational advice from school-based counselling.

The utilization of vocational counselling and guidance services is a two-way process. That is, guidance counsellors and careers advisers must reach pupils, just as individuals must assume some personal responsibility to discuss their vocational plans and problems with the counsellor. Those students who had not seen the guidance staff individually may have been unaware of their work, or, equally possible, they may have been aware but not made the required effort to contact the counsellor. Thus, it is of paramount importance that individuals are made aware of the available guidance services and the possible ramifications of a lack of vocational planning.

The finding that students in the lower forms were less likely to have contact with the counsellor individually is consistent with the findings of Cameron and Livingstone (1979) and also provides support for those writers who claim that school guidance tends to cater for the more academically orientated students (Labour and Employment Gazette, 1976). However, it was shown that fifth formers were significantly more likely to have experienced group counselling. It is apparent that efforts are being made to inform early school leavers about the world of work and to invoke the principle of developmental guidance (Working Party Report, 1971).

Research has not yet demonstrated the superiority of individual over group counselling and guidance, but it has indicated that a combination of the two is more efficacious than the concentration on one or the other (Bennett, 1964; Working Party Report, 1971). Clearly, some aspects of vocational guidance are amenable to the group situation while other aspects are unique to the individual concerned. It is likely that many students in the lower forms still require individual vocational counselling and as such, it would appear from the findings of the present enquiry, that, the desired balance between the two has not yet been fully attained (Working Party Report, 1971).

The next major finding of the present enquiry was, that, despite the fact that the majority of school-leavers had seen the guidance counsellor or careers adviser prior to leaving school and that most had found the information and advice useful at the time, almost half of the employed and unemployed leavers were later, critical of the assistance they received at school and the extent to which school prepared them for their transitional experiences. Though the actual percentages vary, the direction of the finding is consistent with the results of similar studies in this country (Cameron and Livingstone, 1979; McEwan, 1972; Christchurch Employment Advisory Committee, 1979), and overseas (Maizels, 1970; Powell and Bloom, 1962; Colledge et al, 1978).

The findings of the present enquiry suggest that the main thrust of careers education is in orientating students towards the range of occupational information available, and giving advice about the type of work commensurate with an individual's interests and abilities. The study also showed that a number of students on leaving school found this information and advice to be inadequate. The findings illustrate the concerns arising from other studies. It has been suggested (Cameron and Livingstone, 1979) that often this information is about a particular occupation rather than an appreciation of a broad spectrum. It also echoes the conclusion of McEwan (1972) that it is not until school-leavers went to the selection interview that the information about work was obtained. The finding also provides some justification for those employers and writers who have criticized the knowledge young people have about the nature of jobs, their requirements and advancement prospects (Colledge et al, 1978; Employer, 1979; Moore, 1976; Pedder, 1981). Furthermore as Ginzberg (1971) noted, the availability of occupational information does not necessarily mean that it is being used correctly. The student needs to discuss the materials with the counsellor in order to organize what has been learned and apply it to decision-making in both the short and long term.

The prevailing economic conditions will mean that in the future a growing number of students will not necessarily enter the occupation of their choice. Thus,

it is imperative that, the occupational information disseminated encompasses a broad, rather than, a narrow and restrictive view of available options.

It was apparent that, prior to leaving school, work experience and job seeking skills appeared to play only a minimal role in careers education. A striking 53.1% of employed and unemployed leavers felt that insufficient attention had been paid to this aspect of vocational orientation.

The ability of an individual to conduct him or herself appropriately and effectively in an interview, write sound letters of application and knowledge of the range of job finding methods are likely to become increasingly important under conditions of competitive entry into employment (Lavercombe and Fleming, 1981; Granovetter, 1974; Fougère et al, 1981). Clearly, a school-leaver's effectiveness and success in finding appropriate employment is, in part, dependent on the early acquisition of these skills. While it did not appear to impair the ability of the employed leavers in this study, it may well do for some (Gurney, 1981; Christchurch Employment Advisory Committee, 1979).

While the opportunity for work experience has been implemented in a number of schools, a number would have welcomed it as a possible way of gaining a deeper insight into the world of work. While occupational information from pamphlets and guidance staff is valuable, this should not be regarded as a substitute for, actual experience in the work environment where the individual can experience and observe work and its concomitant

environment. The writer is not implying that work experience is necessarily and universally beneficial, for it undoubtedly depends on the attitudes and motives of those employers and school-leavers who participate in the scheme (Hamilton and Crouter, 1980) but in some cases such experience may be invaluable in establishing continuity between school studies, vocational education and the world of work (Pedder, 1981; McEwan, 1972).

The finding that parents were as much a source of help and advice as teachers and careers advisers is consistent with the findings of other studies (McEwan, 1972; Colledge et al, 1978; Moore, 1976; Maizels, 1970). That parents were mentioned relatively frequently, is perhaps not surprising, given that the parents and friends of employed leavers in the present enquiry often had a decisive influence in arranging jobs for their sons and daughters (see Table 38, Chapter 7). It was also interesting to find that teachers were also cited reasonably frequently as a source of help and advice. The nature of these influences was not possible to ascertain, but they apparently do have an important contribution to make in the eyes of school-leavers.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In view of the large number of variables examined, and the complexity of the research design, the findings of the present enquiry have been discussed, relationships with previous research described and explanations generated within each of the previous chapters dealing with results. The present chapter is concerned with general interpretations, conclusions and implications for future research. It must also be recognized that the findings are not necessarily generalizable to all segments of the youthful population because of the limited size of the samples investigated.

The rationale for this research, included as a primary objective, an examination of the effects of unemployment on the self-esteem of school-leavers with consideration given to causal attributions and work-involvement as potential moderating influences. It was also argued that a major criticism which could be levelled at previous research was, the concentration on correlational designs with the consequential inability to differentiate between antecedents and consequences of unemployment. One way to overcome these methodological deficiencies was to examine students' attitudes on the dependent variables prior to leaving school and again at a later point in time. Any forthcoming

changes or differences would then be explicable in terms of either, predetermining factors or transitional experiences.

The inability of the present study to attain this objective was due to the extremely small number of those students initially sampled who were unemployed at the time of the follow-up investigation. This consequently precluded a comparison between the unemployed and the other groups of school leavers studied, and limited a discussion of unemployment again to a content analysis of a small number of interviews, and this is perhaps the primary limitation of the present study.

The possible reasons for this outcome are many and varied.

Initially, the size of the sample was restricted in terms of time, finance and manageability. A second factor restricting the number of respondents unemployed immediately on leaving school was the sizeable number of students returning to school because of unsuccessful attempts on the labour market over the summer vacation.

Another important consideration, is that, the sample consisted of volunteers. Although some screening was achieved with the help of school personnel, to capture a reasonable distribution of respondents and although this objective was largely achieved, it is possible that those participating in the study were optimistic of their chances of securing employment upon leaving school while those who anticipated being unemployed did not come forth.

Fourthly, highly individual characteristics of respondents who made up the sample, such as, job seeking skills, performance at the interview situation, parental and familial contacts regarding employment opportunities, timing of the job search, attitudes to work and a number of wide ranging personal qualities, may have played an appreciable role in the ability of this sample of school-leavers to secure employment relatively promptly.

In retrospect, while the research design and variables considered in the context of the present enquiry have both theoretical promise and practical significance in distinguishing differential reactions to unemployment and the effect of transitional experiences on psychological well-being, realization of these research objectives necessarily requires a larger, more varied sample and a more concentrated research effort than was possible within the scope of the present enquiry. In this sense it is hoped that the present study may at least stimulate action, given both the growing scope of the problem and the absence of any such wide-scale study in this country.

A. Youths' Attitudes to Work

The findings of the present study have demonstrated that some young people want and need to be taken into partnership with the world of work, yet the labour market is apparently ambivalent about affording them such

opportunities. It is the writer's opinion that there is a dearth of systematic evidence to assess the extent, permanence, direction or significance of widely advertised but poorly analyzed trends among young people.

Negative or inaccurate stereotyping of young people may be damaging and even self fulfilling. As with any group of the population, it is important that when reference is made to youth, it must be specified which group of young people is being discussed. Clearly, not all youth display a profound ambivalence towards work and many apparently do find satisfaction in their work environment. It is equally important to investigate what it is about work and the organization of work that some young people find intolerable or even alienating. If we could find the answers to such questions, then the work environment could be adapted in order to achieve a better fit between the values and goals of individuals, employers and society as a whole.

It was also argued that, for some youth, money as a principal incentive to work, may be less effective than it had been in the past. Some young people need job opportunities which allow them to find meaning in work. Thus, the challenge for employers is to ensure that these young people find work that is socially useful, personally meaningful and satisfying and with opportunities to use valued skills and capacities. A lack of such opportunities, was precisely the aspect of working and the job which aroused the most criticism from the employed leavers in the present study.

The present study is of course restricted in the sense that employed leavers' experience in the work situation was of a short duration and only select work attitudes were studied, making interpretation difficult to some extent. Clearly, future research must study youths' attitudes towards work extensively and examine whether they are markedly different from those of other workers. The implications of unduly restricted career ambitions and the consequences of a lack of fit between an individual's values and opportunities for gratification, should also be examined. It may well be that, the reported decline in the motivation of youth to work, may be a consequence of the inability of the present occupational structure to provide the opportunities that young people need most, rather than indicative of an ambivalence to work per se.

This type of approach will require in-depth longitudinal research, following students from school to work and examining how different groups of young people respond and adapt to work and the organization of work over time and the resulting implications for the nature and structure of the work organization.

B. School Guidance and Counselling

The last years of secondary schooling are likely to be an important period, for the young person in forming his or her ideas about working and when information and advice from school counsellors and careers advisers may be an important influence.

It was shown that, the majority of school leavers surveyed had received advice from school based vocational and guidance personnel, either on an individual or group basis and most had found the information useful at the time. Those who had not seen the counsellor individually were disproportionately represented among fifth formers, which serves to heighten the importance of earlier vocational guidance. It also provides some justification for those writers who claim that vocational guidance tends to cater for the more academically orientated students. Males were also less likely to have seen the counsellor before leaving school. The reasons for this should be explored in future research. Do females, for example, envisage having more vocational problems than males, and if so, what are their particular needs? Do males rely more on parents as a source of advice, and if so, is this related to their recruitment network?

The findings of the present study have confirmed the findings of previous research, about the help and advice young people receive from school-based guidance and counselling. The findings show that despite schools having a careers adviser or counsellor and the majority of school-leavers having contact with them, many young people on leaving school and entering full-time employment are subsequently critical of the range and depth of the guidance received.

Moreover, the fact that the employed leavers in the present enquiry were the successful ones, who on the whole managed to enter the occupation of their choice and who found employment relatively promptly, serves to strengthen the basis of this conclusion.

Points of concern arising from the findings of the present enquiry were:

- (i) a lack of sufficient and detailed information on jobs;
 - (ii) a lack of visits to relevant places of employment, which would provide an opportunity to experience the real world of work;
 - (iii) inadequate preparation for, and skills required for the job hunt;
- and (iv) earlier vocational orientation and more school time devoted to it.

That only a third of employed leavers had jobs arranged prior to leaving school may be indicative of either a lack of pre-vocational planning or a consequence of the prevailing economic conditions. It is the writer's belief that a complex combination of the two would best explain this finding, on the basis of the available evidence, which leaves no complacency on either side.

It should not be overlooked that a number of employed leavers cited both teachers and vocational counselors as playing an important role in their eventual entry into employment. The implication is not perhaps that schools and vocational guidance counsellors do not have an important influence, for they have been demonstrated

to have, but in their present form and functioning, were not sufficient to cater for the range of transitional experiences these school-leavers faced.

It is possible that at present, careers advisers and vocational counsellors carry too large a caseload and too many varied responsibilities, and as such, perhaps resources have been spread too thinly and widely, and to some extent have fallen short in providing the level of information and guidance some of these young people felt they required. Further restrictions in information flow may occur because of, the limited first hand knowledge and experience which teachers and guidance personnel have of the industrial and commercial world.

School guidance and counselling cannot afford to operate in a vacuum. Schools alone cannot provide an adequately based and well-balanced guidance programme, rather, schools, employers, labour leaders and the Government must all co-operate in a participative effort to ensure effective transitional programmes in an endeavour to establish continuity between school studies, vocational education, and work.

The present study was not explicitly designed to, comprehensively evaluate secondary school guidance, and the findings are, as a result, limited in terms of their generality and representativeness. The findings were formulated on the basis of a small number of questions which generally tended to elicit global rather than specific responses. Indeed, many questions remain unanswered. For example, what type of information are

young people getting about what jobs, and does it have a realistic basis? Does the information disseminated encompass a broad, or a narrowly restrictive view of the options available? Is the knowledge of guidance personnel limited, and is this related to the information they convey to secondary school students? Other aspects of guidance not covered in the context of the present enquiry are, the contribution of part-time work experience, the efficacy of occupational visits, and the success of transition to work classes. Future research should address itself to these questions. Moreover, future research might concentrate on the varying needs of different youth constituencies - the unemployed, reluctant school returners, and the vocational needs of broad occupational groups - as a single minded and global strategy is not necessarily appropriate or effective for all youth.

The writer also believes that evaluative research on the contribution of vocational education must be an ongoing and continuous process. Clearly, the vocational guidance strategy must operate in a dynamic rather than in a static manner. With the rapidly changing structure of occupations, and the advent of advanced technology; the opportunities available, the nature of the skills and abilities required, and the type of training to be undertaken in occupations, will be in a constant state of flux. It is imperative that employers communicate these changes to schools so that the nature and structure of the curriculum and vocational education can be adapted accordingly.

It must also be recognized that vocational guidance is not a universal panacea, and cannot solve the employment problems endemic to society as a whole, and in a sense there is no substitute for experiential learning. However, if individuals are to profit from experience, they must have the knowledge and equipment (cognitive and behavioural) to make informed and rational choices and to respond to the environment - its opportunities, limitations and changes - in an effective manner. The ability of individuals to do so must be related to any guidance strategy operating within the educational system.

To achieve this end there is a growing need for research which evaluates the vocational work of secondary schools and its relationship to the experiences, frustrations and satisfactions of youth outside of the school environment. This knowledge can only be acquired through increased co-operation between all levels of the antecedent educational structure and consequent employment structure.

C. The Effects of Unemployment on School-leavers

That the unemployed are not a homogeneous group was certainly highlighted in the findings of the present enquiry. Even though the effects observed were formulated on the basis of an extremely small number of unemployed school-leavers, some reactions to and the effects of unemployment were noted.

The findings indicated that the unemployed school-leavers studied in the present enquiry went through phases similar to those described in the literature. The attitudes to and amplitude of reactions to being out of work, were shown to depend on an individual's particular set of circumstances. Attention focussed on a number of mediating factors in an endeavour to explain and account for the variability witnessed.

Work-involvement was shown to be related to both the eagerness and willingness of the unemployed to search for work and to feelings that developed and were associated with being out of work. For individuals whose occupational self-concept is not central to or even peripheral in their lives, the effects of non-work are likely to be less traumatic and they are likely to be able to adapt to their situation with little or no 'apparent' distress. When the work role is an important component in the individual's self-concept, the effects were more marked and demonstrated the importance of the latent functions of work; even for those who had not experienced work in the occupational sense, such functions appear to have been inculcated in subtle ways through the efforts of school, home and society.

Thus, work involvement has been shown to be a utilitarian concept, with regard to examining the differential effects of and reactions to unemployment, and highlights the necessity to examine the meaning of work to the individual in our quest to understand more fully, the effects of unemployment on psychological well-being

and, as such, is worthy of more extensive and rigorous research effort than was possible within the present enquiry.

Unemployment in the present enquiry was not shown to have deleterious effects on self-esteem. The effects of unemployment on self-esteem are ultimately related in a complex and crucial way to the transitional cycle, and to a host of mediating influences, such as the availability of 'work role' substitutes, support from family and friends, changing one's assumptions about the unemployed, the attribution of responsibility and the contemporary high unemployment rates. It is likely that some combination of these factors operating in subtle and complex ways precludes a simple linear relationship from unemployment to loss of self-esteem.

The finding that some unemployed believe that they are legitimately unemployed, that is, their failure on the labour market was not the result of a lack of personal effort or motivation but a product of circumstances beyond their control (current economic recession, too much competition, and too few jobs) perhaps enabled them to maintain their self-respect. Moreover, that their friends and family were able to perceive that their transition from school to unemployment was no fault of their own, and offered not only financial, but emotional and psychological support, may have enabled their self-respect to be maintained in the eyes of 'significant' others.

Other evidence suggests that these unemployed school-leavers may still have been in the optimistic phase of the transitional cycle. During this phase two motivating forces are relevant to maintaining self-esteem, that is, that work is available and that it can be obtained. While most subjects still had possession of this crucial link, the findings presented suggest that the expectancy of obtaining work through one's own efforts was gradually being eroded, this was especially true for those who had been searching longer for work and who had been rejected more often.

It may be then that this change could be a warning sign, and the turning point by which individuals come to accept their situation. The implication here is that the more the individual is convinced that he or she has no chance of securing employment through personal effort, the less likely he or she will be to create the conditions necessary to find employment and may well give up the search for work due to the perceived futility of the situation.

It was not possible to conclude with any degree of certainty whether externalizing the causes for unemployment mitigates the reaction to unemployment. There was no evidence to suggest that the unemployed blame failure on the labour market to external causes to any greater extent. More importantly perhaps, they were not shown to internalize their failure either. It is possible that, the contemporary high rate of unemployment, the widespread publicity the subject has received in recent years, and 'changing' public attitudes to unemployment,

is indirectly having a cushioning or buffering effect on the self-esteem of those who are unable to find employment.

While it was not possible to achieve the primary objective to which this study was addressed, the writer's reading of the literature had helped to organize and clarify her own thinking regarding the direction of future research and the relationship between unemployment and employment.

A number of psychological variables and constructs appropriate to the study of unemployment have been identified in the writings and literature. These include: self-esteem, psychosocial development, locus of control, causal attributions, work values, social support, and the ability of the unemployed to engage in meaningful activities.

While future research must continue to examine the role of these variables in relation to employment, unemployment, re-employment and under-employment, to determine their explanatory significance, it is equally important to examine their interdependence. That is, to what extent are these variables contingent on one another and how are they best related to the psychological effects of unemployment. Possession of fragmented information on each does not constitute an adequate explanation of the way in which individuals respond or adapt to unemployment.

Thus, there is a growing need to go beyond simple bivariate relationships, and to explore systematically, via multivariate analysis, how these variables interact to jointly determine the effects of unemployment. Moreover, future research must examine the predictive power of these variables for different groups of the unemployed population. Clearly, systematic investigations, identifying combinations and quantifying effects for different groups would be functional for counselling purposes and in the design of bridging schemes, which must necessarily cater for, varying individual needs, values, expectations and aspirations, if they are to be effective. One neglected, but important focal group identified in the present study were the 'reluctant' school returners. While returning to school was no more or no less esteem enhancing than entering employment, changes in attitudes towards welfare payments and causal explanations for getting or not getting work were evident. Limitations in interpreting this change occurred because of the poor internal consistency of the attribution measure. This serves to heighten the importance for researchers to develop psychometrically sound scales if tenable effects are to be isolated.

The approach outlined above necessarily requires that researchers in the area, pay more attention to the design of research projects. These designs must be longitudinal in nature, to differentiate between causes and effects and must either control or investigate the role of individual characteristics, situational and mediating variables.

There is also a need for studies which assess the role of macro-variables. To what extent, for example, is the changing reality of full employment affecting the role and meaning of work in society, and does this wider pattern of value change, if existent, affect the unemployed role and its ensuing consequences.

It is also apparent that if the work role is shown to have an important developmental function and if joblessness impedes this development, or is shown to have harmful effects; then, helping individuals to plan for non-work roles may be the next step forward. However, in order to do this, the precise nature of this influence must be identified in future research. The writer is not suggesting that people should be educated for unemployment, that may be self-fulfilling, and ignores the possibility that some aspects of human development may be unique to the work role. However, in a future society when so many people will be without work or faced with the prospect of not having a job throughout various stages of their life span, it is imperative that individuals are made to feel significant and able to contribute to the goals of society. This may require the reorientation of the individual's goals and values in order that work roles are viewed as valid opportunities for growth, and at the same time, so designed as to enable their skills and capabilities to be utilized in a meaningful and psychologically rewarding manner. Perhaps more flexible arrangements in the organization of work could be made (for example, job sharing, reduced working hours, and part-time work) in an endeavour to

achieve the optimum balance between work and non-work roles. In this way people could perhaps move between periods of employment, education and non-work roles and the individual and collective consequences of 'unemployment' could be minimized, if not eradicated.

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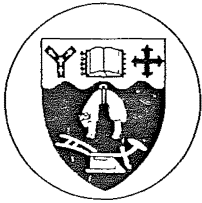
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APPENDIX A (i)
THE FIRST LETTER

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University of Canterbury Christchurch 1 New Zealand
Department of Psychology

21 October 1981

Dear Parents,

As the parents of a young person who, in the near future, will be completing secondary schooling, you will probably be aware of the difficulties in the current employment situation. It has become clear that in New Zealand there are still many unanswered questions concerning the experiences school-leavers have in seeking their first job, what helps and what hinders this and what their attitudes are.

The Psychology Department at the University of Canterbury is in the process of carrying out some research on this topic in a small sample of Christchurch secondary schools. In doing so it is following closely upon research which has been undertaken with school-leavers in Australia in 1980, and in Auckland earlier this year. The research which is under the supervision of Mr B.D. Jamieson, Reader in Psychology, is being undertaken by Miss Marion Ambrosius, who is a post-graduate student. Our purpose in contacting you is to request your cooperation and help with the research by agreeing to let your son or daughter participate with us.

The research will involve considerable numbers of senior pupils completing a brief questionnaire about their attitudes and expectations concerning work late in 1981. The questionnaire is planned to be administered in not more than one hour and the time will not be taken from examination subjects. Early in 1982 it is our aim to contact pupils who will by then have left school and try to obtain some follow up information on the experiences they have had in seeking initial jobs. We hope then to be able to identify some of the background factors that have helped people to gain employment, or which might have made jobs hard to obtain. We think that the pupils who do participate will find the experience interesting and in some cases the questions may help them to clarify their own thinking about their work expectations.

We wish to stress that the information which is obtained will remain strictly confidential to the two researchers. The general research results will be anonymous, that is, no individual pupils or schools will be mentioned. We intend to make the results available to the schools which participate so that they can make use of them in counselling future students, and we also intend to prepare a brief summary statement of the results for those who participate in the research.

Finally, if you wish to enquire further about the research please contact:

Miss M. Ambrosius	Telephone 65 535
or Mr B.D. Jamieson	Telephone 482 009 Ext.8680

Yours sincerely,

M. Ambrosius (signed)
B.D. Jamieson (signed)

I have given approval for the research project to be carried out in our school.

PRINCIPAL.

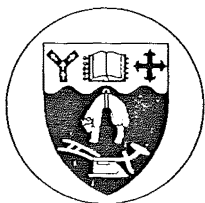
Please return this slip to school.

Cross out the statement which does NOT apply.

I/We give permission for _____ to take part in this research.

I/We do not give permission for _____ to take part in this research.

Signed: _____

THE SECOND LETTER

University of Canterbury Christchurch 1 New Zealand
Department of Psychology

5 April 1982

Dear

In November 1981 I was at your school conducting a questionnaire on the attitudes of school-leavers to work and unemployment. At the time you agreed to be contacted again in March of this year, regarding your experiences since leaving school. The purpose of doing this is to see what helps people to gain employment and what makes jobs more difficult to obtain.

Please find enclosed a further questionnaire which I would like you to complete and post back to me. So you can be sure your answers remain confidential, I ask you to return the questionnaire unsigned in the enclosed stamped, addressed envelope. However, to allow me to be certain that your questionnaire reached you, would you please complete the statement on the enclosed card and forward this back in the small envelope provided.

I would be grateful if you could keep in mind the following when answering the questions:-

1. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers to any of the questions in this questionnaire. It is your own attitudes, ideas and experiences I am interested in rather than those you think are true.
2. Carefully read and follow the instructions for each part of the questionnaire. Only circle one answer, where you have been asked to choose between a number of responses.
3. Please check you have answered all the questions.
4. The research is important. We hope that the information obtained will be used by people in the community (for example, schools, local bodies, employers and vocational guidance) to help them understand more about the problems of leaving school and going to work. This should in turn benefit school-leavers looking for their first job.

If you have any enquiries about the questionnaire or if there is anything in the questionnaire which you find too personal and would prefer to talk to me about, please do not hesitate to phone me at home, Christchurch 554-607.

To enable me to send you a brief summary statement of the results please complete and return the questionnaire as soon as possible.

I hope you will find this an interesting exercise and will continue to support the project. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

K.M. Ambrosius (signed)

Encls.

APPENDIX A (iii)

THE REPLY CARD

This is to say that

has completed and returned the questionnaire.

APPENDIX B (i) - THE SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

Directions: Below are a number of statements which people have used to describe themselves. Read each statement and then circle the appropriate number underneath each statement to indicate how well the statement describes how you usually feel. Remember there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers.

1. I often wish I were someone else.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately so	Very much so
1	2	3	4
2. I find it very hard to talk in front of a group.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately so	Very much so
1	2	3	4
3. There are lots of things I'd change about myself if I could.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately so	Very much so
1	2	3	4
4. I can make up my mind without too much trouble.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately so	Very much so
1	2	3	4
5. I'm a lot of fun to be with.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately so	Very much so
1	2	3	4
6. I get upset easily at home.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately so	Very much so
1	2	3	4
7. It takes me a long time to get used to anything new.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately so	Very much so
1	2	3	4
8. I'm popular with other people my own age.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately so	Very much so
1	2	3	4
9. My family usually considers my feelings.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately so	Very much so
1	2	3	4
10. I give in very easily.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately so	Very much so
1	2	3	4
11. My family expects too much of me.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately so	Very much so
1	2	3	4
12. It's pretty tough to be me.

Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately so	Very much so
1	2	3	4

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|----------|---------------|--------------|
| 13. | Things are all mixed up in my life. | | | |
| | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately so | Very much so |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. | Other people usually follow my ideas. | | | |
| | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately so | Very much so |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. | I have a low opinion of myself. | | | |
| | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately so | Very much so |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. | There are many times when I'd like to leave home. | | | |
| | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately so | Very much so |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. | I often feel upset about the work that I do. | | | |
| | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately so | Very much so |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. | I'm as nice looking as most people. | | | |
| | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately so | Very much so |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. | If I have something to say, I usually say it. | | | |
| | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately so | Very much so |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. | My family understands me. | | | |
| | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately so | Very much so |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. | Most people are better liked than I am. | | | |
| | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately so | Very much so |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. | I usually feel as if my family are pushing me. | | | |
| | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately so | Very much so |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. | I often get discouraged in what I am doing. | | | |
| | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately so | Very much so |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24. | Things don't usually bother me. | | | |
| | Not at all | Somewhat | Moderately so | Very much so |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

APPENDIX B (ii)

THE ATTRIBUTION SCALE

Directions: There are many reasons for school-leavers getting or not getting paid work when they finish their education. Here are some common explanations. I would like you to indicate how often these reasons are true by circling one of the numbers alongside each sentence. If you think the statement is: -

- Never True draw a circle around (1.)
- True occasionally draw a circle around (2.)
- True half of the time draw a circle around (3.)
- True most of the time draw a circle around (4.)
- Always True draw a circle around (5.)

1. Young people miss out on getting jobs because employers are prejudiced against them.	1	2	3	4	5
2. If you miss out on getting work it is because you are not good enough.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Kids get work if they look hard enough and often enough.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The government is to blame for young people being out of work.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Getting a job depends on sheer good luck.	1	2	3	4	5
6. School-leavers are unemployed because older people have taken all the jobs.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Young people don't get jobs because they are not good enough at "putting themselves over" in applications and interviews.	1	2	3	4	5
8. You can get a job if you are well qualified.	1	2	3	4	5
9. People who haven't got work don't really want to work or haven't looked hard enough.	1	2	3	4	5
10. If you are good looking and have lots of confidence you'll get a job.	1	2	3	4	5
11. To get a job, you need someone with influence to "put in a good word" for you.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Going to the right school and having the right contacts is a big part of getting a job.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B(iii)

WORK ATTITUDES⁽¹⁾

DIRECTIONS: For some people work is just a means to get money; it's something they have to put up with. For others, work is the centre of their life, something that really matters to them. I would like to ask you about your reactions to work in general and whether doing work is important to you personally. By 'work' I mean having a paid job.

Here are some statements about work, and having work in general.

If you:

- Strongly Agree with a statement draw a circle around SA
- Agree with a statement draw a circle around A
- Are Undecided about a statement draw a circle around U
- Disagree with a statement, draw a circle around D
- Strongly Disagree with a statement draw a circle around SD

Remember I am asking about paid jobs in general.

(2)

WORK INVOLVEMENT: PRIOR TO LEAVING SCHOOL

1. Even if I won a great deal of money I would still continue to work somewhere	SA	A	U	S	SD
2. Getting a job when I leave school is important to me	SA	A	U	S	SD
3. I would not like to be on the Unemployment Benefit when I leave school	SA	A	U	S	SD
4. Other activities are more important to me than work	SA	A	U	S	SD
5. If the unemployment benefit was really high I would still continue to work somewhere	SA	A	U	S	SD
6. I wouldn't like being out of work when I leave school	SA	A	U	S	SD

-
- (1) The items forming each subset of work attitudes were dispersed throughout this section of the questionnaire but presented this way for clarity.
- (2) Slight modifications were made to the work involvement items for the follow-up to make the items appropriate for each group of school-leavers responding. The exact item for each group of school leavers is presented on page. 236.

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 7. I would only do overtime if I needed the money | SA | A | U | S | SD |
| 8. Work would make me feel I was doing something with my life | SA | A | U | S | SD |

THE IMPORTANCE OF WAGES

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 9. There's no point in working except to get paid | SA | A | U | S | SD |
| 10. A person should choose the job which pays the most | SA | A | U | S | SD |
| 11. A person should choose one job over another mostly because of higher wages | SA | A | U | S | SD |

PROMOTION

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 12. People are better off if they are satisfied with their job and aren't concerned about being promoted to another job | SA | A | U | S | SD |
| 13. You should always choose a job that will lead onto a better job | SA | A | U | S | SD |
| 14. If people like their jobs they should be satisfied and not push for promotion to another job | SA | A | U | S | SD |

WORK AS AN INSTRUMENTAL VARIABLE

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 15. The person who holds down a good job is the most respected person in the community | SA | A | U | S | SD |
| 16. You can measure a person pretty well by the job he does | SA | A | U | S | SD |
| 17. Having a good job makes a person worthy of praise from his friends and family | SA | A | U | S | SD |
| 18. My friends would not think much of me if I did not have a good job | SA | A | U | S | SD |

WORK INVOLVEMENT SCALE:
FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

a) Employed Leavers

Even if I won a great deal of money I would still continue to work somewhere.

Having a job is important to me.

I would not like to be on the unemployment benefit.

Other activities are more important to me than work.

If the unemployment benefit was really high I would still continue to work somewhere.

I wouldn't like being out of work.

I would only do overtime if I needed money.

Work makes me feel I'm doing something worthwhile with my life.

b) Unemployed Leavers

Even if I won a great deal of money I would still continue to work somewhere.

Getting a job is important to me.

I do not like being on the unemployment benefit.

Other activities are more important to me than work.

If the unemployment benefit was really high I would still continue to work somewhere.

I don't like being out of work.

I would only do overtime if I needed the money.

Work would make me feel I was doing something worthwhile with my life.

c) School returners/tertiary students

Even if I won a great deal of money I would still continue to look for work somewhere.

Getting a job is important to me.

I would not like being on the unemployment benefit.

Other activities are more important to me than work.

If the unemployment benefit was really high I would still continue to work somewhere.

I wouldn't like being out of work.

I would only do overtime if I needed the money.

Work would make me feel I was doing something worthwhile with my life.

APPENDIX C

THE PRE-EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONNAIREPRE-EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

I would like you to help us by answering some questions about a number of things. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, it is your 'feelings' about the questions that I want. All replies will be treated as strictly CONFIDENTIAL.

Marion Ambrosius
Psychology Department
University of Canterbury

1. Name: _____
2. Date: _____
3. School: _____
4. What is your sex? (Tick the right box).
 Male ☐ Female ☐
5. How old are you? (Fill in the space provided.)
 Years ☐ Months ☐
6. How many brothers and sisters do you have altogether? (If none put 0)

7. How many of your brothers and sisters still live at home?

8. Where do you come in your family? (Tick the right box)
 Only child ☐ Third born ☐
 First born ☐ Fourth or later born ☐
 Second born ☐
9. What Form are you in at school? (Tick the right box)
 5th Form ☐ 6th Form ☐ 7th Form ☐
10. Is this the first year you have been in this Form?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
11. Have you ever sat School Certificate?
 Yes ☐ Sitting this year ☐
12. If you have sat School Certificate, in how many subjects did you pass?
 (Tick the right box)

0	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>				

13. Have you ever sat University Entrance? (Tick the right box)

Yes - Accredited.

☐

Yes - Sat University Entrance examinations and passed.

☐

Yes - Sat University Entrance examinations and did not pass.

☐

Sitting this year.

☐

No.

☐

(If this is your second year in the 6th Form tick all those boxes which apply)

14. If you passed University Entrance, in how many subjects did you pass?

(Tick the right box)

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

15. If you hold a Sixth Form Certificate, in how many subjects did you get grades 1 - 5?

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☐

4 ☐

5 ☐

6 ☐

16. Have you sat any other examinations? For example, Music, Speech, Drama.
(Please write these down in the space provided)

17. Have you, individually, been to see the school guidance counsellor, or career's adviser about what you are going to do when you leave school?
(Tick the right box)

Yes ☐

No ☐

18. If you found the school guidance counsellor or career's adviser to be of help, why was this so? (Please state your reasons in the space provided)

19. If you found the school guidance counsellor or career's adviser to be of little help, why was this so? (Please state your reasons in the space provided)

20. Has your school counsellor or career's adviser visited your class as a whole?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
21. If your school counsellor or career's adviser has talked to your class as a whole, did you find this a useful exercise?
 Yes ☐ No ☐
22. If you found this to be a useful exercise, why was this so? (Please state reasons in the space provided) _____

23. If you did not find this a useful exercise, why was this so? (Please state reasons in the space provided) _____

24. Please tick which of the following educational qualifications your father gained:
 At least two years secondary schooling _____
 School Certificate _____
 University Entrance _____
 University degree _____
 Don't know _____
25. Please state any trade or professional qualifications which your father has gained (e.g. apprenticeship, technical institute, teachers' college). If you are unsure write 'don't know'.

26. Please tick which of the following educational qualifications your mother gained:
 At least two years secondary schooling _____
 School Certificate _____
 University Entrance _____
 University degree _____
 Don't know _____

27. Please state any trade or professional qualifications which your mother has gained (e.g. apprenticeship, technical institute, teachers' college). If you are unsure, write 'don't know'.

28. What is your father's present job?

29. If your mother works in a paid job, what is her job?

30. If your mother works, approximately how many hours per week does she work at her paid job? (Please tick the right box)

Less than 10 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
10-20 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
20-30 hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
40 or more hours	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please attempt to complete one of the following statements by giving the reasons you feel apply to you.

31. I am likely to get a job when I leave school because (Please state main reason)

32. I am not likely to get a job when I leave school because (Please state main reason)

If you have any comments about the questionnaire, or you would like to add something that you feel was not covered, please feel free to do so in the space provided below.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Thank you for giving up some of your time to answer these questions. Remember I might be wanting to talk to you again in March/April of next year. In order for me to contact you nearer that time could you please write down your address and telephone number. This will, of course, be treated as confidential.

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

APPENDIX D

THE EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIREEMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

I would like you to help us by answering some questions about a number of things. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, it is your 'feelings' about the questions I want. All replies will be treated as strictly CONFIDENTIAL.

Marion Ambrosius

Psychology Department

University of Canterbury

1. Date:

2. Where are you living at present? *(Please tick the box which is correct for you)*

At home ☐

Private boarding ☐

Flatting with others ☐

Flatting alone ☐

Other: *(Please state)* _____

3. Are you financially dependent on your parents?

Yes ☐

No ☐

4. Do you have any of the following qualifications? *(Put a tick beside the ones you have and to the right of each one write the number of subjects you passed in)*

School Certificate _____ Number of subjects _____

University Entrance _____ Number of subjects _____
(accredited)

University entrance _____ Number of subjects _____
(sat university exams)

6th Form Certificate _____ Number of subjects _____
(Grades 1 - 5)

Bursary _____ Number of subjects _____

7th Form Certificate _____ Number of subjects _____

Other: *(Please state)* _____

5. At the moment I am *(Please put a tick beside the correct statement)*

Employed full-time _____

Employed part-time _____

Full-time University student _____

Full-time Technical Institute student _____

Full-time Teachers' College student _____

Unemployed _____

If none of the above statements describe what you are doing right now, please describe it here: _____

IF YOU HAVE RETURNED TO SCHOOL THIS YEAR, PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS 6 - 8,
OTHERWISE GO ON TO QUESTION 9.

6. What form are you in?

5th _____ 6th _____ 7th _____

7. Is this the first year you have been in this form?

Yes _____ No _____

8. Why did you return to school this year? *(Please state your reasons in the space provided)* _____

APPENDIX D (i)

EMPLOYED LEAVERS' SECTION

If you are EMPLOYED full-time (or if you are employed part-time and would NOT prefer full-time employment) please answer questions 16-34.

16. What is your present job? _____

17. How many jobs have you had since leaving school? _____

18. If your present job is NOT the first job you have had since leaving school, please state what other job(s) you have had, and your reasons for leaving them.

Job 1: _____

Job 2: _____

Job 3: _____

Job 4: _____

Job 5: _____

19. How long did it take you to find a job after leaving school?

_____ weeks _____ months

20. How many times did you try to get a job before you actually got one?

About _____ times.

21. Have you been to see any employment agencies since leaving school?

Yes _____ No _____

If your answer to the above question was YES please state which employment agencies you have seen and beside each one write down in what ways you found them of help/of little help. (for example, Department of Labour, Vocational Guidance, etc.)

22. How much do you like your present job? *(Please put a tick beside the statement which best describes how you 'feel')*

- I like it a lot _____
- I like it a little _____
- I don't like or dislike it _____
- I don't like it much _____
- I hate it _____

23. Why did you take your present job?

24. What would make you leave your job?

25. When you got your job, what factors do you think helped you?

26. Who do you think is most responsible, or has best prepared you for obtaining a job?

27. Do you think that school prepared you for your experiences since leaving school?

Yes _____ No _____

In what ways did school prepare you for your experiences since leaving school?

In what ways do you think vocational guidance and schools in général could be improved to meet the needs of school-leavers in obtaining their first job?

28. Would you like to do any further study/training? Please specify.

29. What do you think is the best thing about having a job?

30. What do you think is the worst thing about having a job?

31. Overall how satisfied are you with your present job?

- Very satisfied _____
- Satisfied _____
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied _____
- Dissatisfied _____
- Very dissatisfied _____

32. Are many of your friends working?

- | | | | |
|------|-------------|-----------------|------|
| Most | Quite a few | Only one or two | None |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

33. Are any members of your family unemployed at present? If YES please state their relationship to you (e.g. sister, brother, mother, father)

APPENDIX D (ii)

UNEMPLOYED LEAVERS' SECTION

If you are UNEMPLOYED (or if you are employed part-time and would prefer a full-time job) please answer questions 16-40.

16. How long have you been unemployed?

Weeks _____ Months _____

17. Are you looking for work right now?

Yes _____ No _____

18. Are you registered as Unemployed with the Labour Department?

Yes _____ No _____

19. Are you receiving a benefit?

Yes _____ No _____

20. Have you had any full-time jobs since leaving school?

Yes _____ No _____

If your answer to the above question was YES, could you briefly describe the job(s) and your reasons for leaving them?

Job 1: _____

Job 2: _____

Job 3: _____

Job 4: _____

Job 5: _____

21. Have you had any part-time jobs since leaving school?

Yes _____ No _____

If your answer to the above question was YES, could you briefly describe the job(s) and your reasons for leaving them?

Job 1: _____

Job 2: _____

Job 3: _____

Job 4: _____

Job 5: _____

22. Since you have been unemployed, about how many times have you tried to get a job? (e.g. rung up about a job advertised in the paper, written letters, asked about jobs, etc.)

About _____ times.

23. If you did not receive notification from employers of your failure to get a job, what was your reaction to this?

24. When you've been turned down for jobs, why do you think you didn't get them?
(Please state your reasons in the space provided)

25. Have you been to see any employment agencies since leaving school?

Yes _____ No _____

If you answer to the above question was YES, please state which employment agencies you have seen and beside each one write down in what way you found them to be of help/of little help. (e.g. Department of Labour, Vocational Guidance, etc.)

26. Would you prefer to be working?

Yes _____ No _____

Why would you prefer to be working?

Why would you prefer NOT to be working?

27. Would you take any full-time job if it was offered to you?

Yes _____ No _____

28. What would make you refuse a job?

29. Who do you think is most responsible for your not having a job?

30. Do you think that school prepared you for your experiences since leaving school?

Yes _____ No _____

In what ways did school prepare you for your experiences since leaving school?

In what ways do you think that vocational guidance and schools in general could be improved to meet the needs of school-leavers in obtaining their first job?

31. Would you like to do any further study/training?

Yes

No

Why is this so?

32. What is the worst thing about being unemployed?

33. What is the best thing about being unemployed?

34. How does being unemployed make you feel?

35. How do you feel about being unemployed now, compared to how you felt when you were first unemployed?

36. Could you please try and describe what the initial reaction of your family was to you when you couldn't get a job, and state whether this has changed at all now.

37. Does the fact that you don't have a job cause any tension between you and other members of the family? In what way, if any?

38. Are many members of your family unemployed at present? If YES please state their relationship to you. (e.g. brother, sister, mother, father)

39. Are many of your friends unemployed? *(Please put a circle around the answer which is correct for you)*

- | | | | |
|------|-------------|-----------------|------|
| Most | Quite a few | Only one or two | None |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

APPENDIX E

THE UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW

This is a general outline of the material covered in the unstructured interview. Its structure and form varied from respondent to respondent.

Background/Unemployment Benefit/finding a job

1. How long have you been unemployed for? Are you looking for work right now?
2. Are you on the Unemployment Benefit?
If Yes, How do you 'feel' about being on the Unemployment Benefit?
If No, Why is this so?
3. Is the Unemployment Benefit adequate for you to live on?
4. Have you had any jobs since leaving school? If Yes get details of length of employment, and reasons for leaving. How did you get the job?
5. About how many jobs have you applied for since leaving school?
6. Have you been to see any people or agencies that might be able to help you to find a job?
If Yes, Get details of which ones,
How did they help you?
In what ways could they have been more helpful?
7. How do you find out what jobs are available?
8. Are employers prejudiced against you because you are unemployed?

9. How well would you say employers have treated you?
10. Could you describe any personal reasons which you believe may have prevented you from getting a job?
11. Why do you think you haven't got the jobs you've applied for?

Reactions to being unemployed

12. Could you describe how you felt when you were first unemployed?
13. How do you feel about being unemployed now?
14. Have you changed as a person since you've been unemployed? Why?
15. What is the worst thing about being unemployed?
16. What is the best thing about being unemployed?
17. Would having a job change your life in any way?

Relationships

18. Have your friends reacted to you any differently because you don't have a job?
19. Do people in general react to you any differently because you don't have a job?

20. How did your parents react to you when you couldn't get a job?
21. What do your parents think of your being unemployed now?
22. Does being unemployed cause any tension between you and other members of your family? In what way?
23. Have your parents and family helped you to cope with being unemployed? In what ways?

Leisure Activities

24. Could you describe how you spend a typical day?
25. Has the way you spend your day changed at all since you were first unemployed?
26. Do you enjoy your normal day to day activities?
If No get reasons.
27. Do you belong to any sports clubs and voluntary organizations? Which ones?
28. Are these similar to those you were involved in at school?
29. Do you have enough to do in your spare time?
If No What else would you like to do?
30. Does being unemployed prevent you from doing things you would otherwise like to do?

Future Expectations

31. How long do you think you will be unemployed for?

32. What do you think your chances of getting a job are?

APPENDIX F

INTER-ITEM CORRELATIONS OF WORK-ATTITUDE ITEMS

INTER-ITEM CORRELATIONS OF WORK-ATTITUDE ITEMS														Work as an instrumental variable				
Item	Work Involvement									Wages		Promotion						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
1	1.00	.14	.06	.21	.39	.08	.22	.18	.12	.23	.20	.03	.09	.11	-.10	.03	.01	.03
2		1.00	.24	.18	.24	.26	.04	.36	.03	.09	.05	.11	.06	.10	-.05	.09	.01	.06
3			1.00	.17	.20	.38	.03	.22	.15	.10	-.01	.15	-.00	.04	.07	.10	.04	.08
4				1.00	.25	.13	.14	.27	.15	.12	.06	.04	.07	.04	-.02	.05	.00	.01
5					1.00	.33	.26	.20	.28	.31	.35	-.01	.14	.07	-.16	-.04	.05	.08
6						1.00	.14	.20	.15	.06	.18	.02	-.03	.04	.04	.04	.02	.03
7							1.00	.03	.15	-.02	.26	-.02	.07	.04	.01	.02	.01	.01
8								1.00	-.02	.03	-.07	.24	-.03	.07	.06	.07	.14	.14
9									1.00	.36	.48	-.13	.02	.08	-.11	-.17	-.18	.00
10										1.00	.42	-.02	-.03	.03	-.11	-.17	-.14	.01
11											1.00	-.15	.02	-.05	-.24	-.29	-.25	.01
12												1.00	.21	.19	.18	.23	.05	.17
13													1.00	.40	.04	-.09	-.08	-.05
14														1.00	-.05	.12	.13	-.08
15															1.00	.22	.25	.20
16																1.00	.20	.20
17																	1.00	.11
18																		1.00

APPENDIX G

REASONS GIVEN FOR GETTING OR NOT GETTING WORK
ON LEAVING SCHOOL

	Nos.	%(R)	%/Cases
Qualifications and experience	75	38.7	52.8
Contacts	16	8.2	11.3
Personal Qualities and work attitudes	42	21.6	29.6
Effort	38	19.6	26.8
Interview techniques	8	4.1	5.6
Dislikes welfare	15	7.7	10.6
(N=142)	194	100.0	136.6

REASONS GIVEN FOR NOT OBTAINING EMPLOYMENT

	Nos.	%(R)	%/Cases
Lacks qualifications	21	38.9	48.8
Lack of effort	2	3.7	4.7
Work attitudes and personal shortcomings	9	16.7	20.9
Poor interview performance	7	1.9	16.3
Unemployment situation	15	27.8	34.9
(N=43)	54	100.0	125.6

APPENDIX H

PROFILES OF UNEMPLOYED RESPONDENTSSubject one

The profile of this unemployed school leaver was based solely on questionnaire responses, and, as such, should not be regarded as a full or complete account of this boy's attitudes and unemployment experiences.

Subject one was a 17½ year old male who left school with five School Certificate subjects, and University Entrance accredited in five subjects. He came from an educated background, both parents had obtained university degrees. There appeared to be some friction between the boy and his parents. At the time of the follow-up survey he had left home and was flatting with a group of other people. Leaving home appeared to alleviate the tension in family relationships and the guilt he felt. A number of his friends were also without work.

This school leaver had been unemployed for 4½ months and had not attempted to find employment. Being unemployed had not affected his view of himself but he indicated that he had changed, but did not elaborate as to the nature of the change.

His dislike of work appeared to be connected to a rejection of the capitalistic system, the motives of government and big business, and materialistic values.

He saw employers and the government as powerful elites interested merely in making a profit to elevate the rich on pedestals of money, without regard or concern for the majority of people who make up the population.

Ironically, money was an important motivation to work. Possibly he was aware that the acquisition of money was essential to enable him to pursue the interests and activities most important to him. Working as a means of status and identity in society was not valued. The reasons for his alienation from the work role were not established but it appeared that his being unemployed served as a protest of non-conformity to these values.

Subject Two

The impressions gained from this respondent were very sketchy, being based entirely on questionnaire material. Moreover, his replies to questions were characterized by single word responses with no elaboration.

This respondent was a 16½ year old male, who left school with three School Certificate subjects. He did return to school for a further year but remained for only three weeks. He lived at home with his parents, was receiving the Unemployment Benefit and indicated that he was financially self-sufficient.

This unemployed school-leaver had made virtually no attempts to find employment and, for reasons unknown, appeared to reject the work role.

Adapting to unemployment did not 'appear' to pose any problems for him. He was apparently quite content with the large amount of discretionary time available to him, accepted welfare as an alternative to work, and the majority of his friends were also without work.

This respondent indicated that he was involved in a 'punk' group. It was not possible to ascertain if he was involved in this group prior to leaving school or whether it was a response to the frustrations of being without work. One way or another, it was apparent that being part of a youth protest movement was a possible replacement for the work role as a central life interest. While some of the activities engaged in might be regarded as a form of escapism (for example, alcohol and drugs) the friendships formed and the shared attitudes and values may have provided him with a form of self-expression and identity that the work role possibly could not fulfil.

Subject Three

Subject three was an 18½ year old male. In the five years he had spent at secondary school (two years being spent in the sixth form) he had gained School Certificate in five subjects and was accredited University Entrance in five subjects. Previous work experience whilst at school included part-time work as a security guard and seasonal work as a ski patroller.

While this respondent had been without work since leaving school, he had actively been seeking work for only six weeks at the time of the interview. He did not want to begin working immediately on leaving school but had a holiday with friends.

He had been on the Unemployment Benefit for four months at the time of the interview, and lived at home. The only financial assistance he received from his parents was the waiver of board until he obtained a job. While the boy's parents wanted him to obtain employment and advised him in this matter, they accepted that he was sufficiently mature to assume responsibility for his own actions and did not expect him to conform to their expectations.

The writer found this person to be casual and relaxed throughout the interview. He was confident in himself, in his relationships with his parents and friends, and in his abilities as a potential worker.

In the six weeks he had been looking for work, numerous strategies to find employment had been utilized (for example, newspapers, calling in on firms, and Government departments, and the job board of the Labour Department). At the time of the interview he believed that he had not exhausted all possibilities and was extremely confident of finding employment in the not too distant future. He accepted rejections as part of the process at this stage, and did not feel in any way despondent.

At the time of the interview, the boy's only complaints were that he was bored and that his daily habits

had deteriorated. This boy's major satisfaction in his life centered around his leisure activities and relationships with peers. Work was not important in comparison, but instrumental in the sense that he required money to do the things he enjoyed most. Strangely, however, he had lost motivation to continue in these activities with the majority of his friends working. The pleasure of having a large amount of discretionary time available was reduced as his peers formed an integral part of the enjoyment obtained.

In the long term, he wanted to gain experience and utilize his 'artistic talent' and the work role was important to this end. In the short term, he wanted to learn and experience life through non-work roles (tramping, skiing and travelling overseas) which he felt would broaden his personal outlook and enable him to become a more capable member of the workforce.

Subject Four

Subject four was an unemployed 17 year old female, who left school having gained School Certificate in five subjects and University Entrance in two. Part-time work experience whilst at school included, nurse aiding and working in her parents' market garden.

Prior to leaving school she had taken some steps to find employment but had not been successful. She left school optimistic of her chances of finding employment, spent a month holidaying with friends and then resumed

the search for work. The girl's school friends had at this stage returned to school or were working, without her realizing the length of time that had elapsed.

Following her parents' suggestion, she registered with the Labour Department and began receiving the Unemployment Benefit at the beginning of February. She searched for work in an enthusiastic manner, not relying solely on newspapers or the efforts of the Labour Department. Writing letters, calling in on or phoning organizations, were some of the avenues she pursued.

Initially she restricted her options to the type of work she desired most, nurse aiding where she wanted to gain experience in the field in order to reapply for nursing. Work experience of this nature was instrumental to this end. After a month, she began to apply for a wider variety of jobs, realizing that she may not find the work of her choice and in a desperate effort to find employment. She was at this stage very bored with being at home all day.

Her initial optimism of finding employment had waned, and she began to re-evaluate the situation. She contemplated going back to school but felt this would only delay finding employment for a further year.

Some of her school friends criticised her for being on the Unemployment Benefit. However, at the time of the interview, she was adamant that she was not bludging on society and did not feel ashamed or degraded. Her awareness that she was doing her utmost

to find employment, and that her parents and closest friends did not blame her, but gave her positive encouragement and support, was sufficient to negate the deprecatory remarks of others.

This person seemed generally confident in herself as a person, and in her capabilities. At times she lost hope of finding employment, and began to doubt her performance in interviews. Overall, her attitude towards finding employment was a positive one and she was determined not to let the situation affect her.

She realized that jobs were difficult to obtain and she was not unemployed as a result of any personal deficiencies, lack of effort or motivation. In specific instances she felt her age and lack of experience were possible reasons for being unsuccessful. Transport also posed some difficulties as she lived in a rural area with poor public transport facilities. Success in finding employment would come to her eventually, she felt, because of her motivation, work attitudes and her consistent effort.

The work values of this girl were goal directed, rather than financially orientated. She wanted to gain experience and contribute to society via the work role, but at the same time was placed in a quandary as no one was able to afford her this opportunity.

Leisure and social activities were also important to her, and complemented the work role, but when the opportunities which work provides were continually not being met, feelings of uselessness, frustrated career ambitions and boredom resulted, and were sources of intermittent 'depression'.

Subject five

Subject five was a 17½ year old female who had spent five years at secondary school, two being spent in the sixth form. During her time at secondary school she had obtained two School Certificate passes and possessed a Sixth Form Certificate. Additional qualifications held were, Pitmans Elementary and Intermediate Typing Certificates. This subject had not had any part-time work experience prior to leaving school.

At the time of the interview she had been actively seeking work for three months. She had commenced to search for work early in February, after returning from a holiday with her family.

When initially contacted she was registered with the Labour Department and received the Unemployment Benefit. At the time of the interview she had subsequently cancelled the benefit at her father's request. Her parents paid her the amount previously received from the Social Welfare Department. She felt that this placed a little more pressure on her to find employment as she did not want to be a financial burden on her parents, but was not concerned about being dependent on them.

Prior to leaving school, she had hoped that her parents would be able to arrange a job for her in their place of employment. She applied for the job but was unsuccessful. Another opportunity arose in the same organization but the supervisor of the department felt

that the job was unsuitable for her. The girl's father was also in a position to arrange a job for her in an industrial organization but was not enthusiastic about her working there. The starting time was 6.00 a.m. which posed transport problems and the father was concerned for the safety of his daughter.

These opportunities arose early on in the search for work and at that time she had not tried other avenues, so she passed them over.

This girl relied mainly on the local newspapers for employment opportunities but did write letters to Government departments who took her name and indicated that they would contact her should a suitable vacancy arise. In her search for work, this girl was reluctant to call in on firms which she viewed as a desperate measure, and she did not like to 'beg' for employment.

Initially, she enjoyed staying at home, but at the time of the interview felt bored and slightly despondent. Receiving notices of unsuccessful applications was a source of intermittent annoyance. The greatest source of distress for this girl was feeling embarrassed at being unemployed, particularly when admitting this fact to other people, and her sensitivity to remarks made by others. In spite of her continual efforts to secure employment, her awareness of the social stigma related to the unemployed, at times overwhelmed her.

This girl did not feel that being unemployed had denigrated her general feelings of self-worth. She accepted that, for the time being, she was unemployed,

but was positive of her chances of finding employment in the future. She did feel that finding employment would boost her confidence in herself and her abilities. Her parents and friends did not make her feel unwanted or as if she was a failure, but were both understanding and supportive, often giving open encouragement and making reassuring comments. This helped her to accept the situation which she was in with greater ease, even though she felt that she was disappointing her parents to some extent.

Subject six

This female was 16½ years of age. School achievements included five School Certificate subjects and University Entrance accredited in five subjects.

Working casually for her father earning a very small amount of money was her sole source of income - she was not drawing the Unemployment Benefit and was not registered with the Labour Department. She regarded that as a 'last ditch' effort. Both the girl and her parents felt that being on the Unemployment Benefit was 'degrading' and reasoned that it was better to work for money than receive Social Welfare payments.

This person had been unemployed since leaving school, began searching for work in mid-November prior to leaving school, but without success, and at the time of the interview, was still actively seeking work.

A wide range of strategies had been utilized in the thirty or more jobs which she had applied for. These included, the school notice board, contacting firms by telephoning or calling in, local newspapers, employment agencies and by word of mouth.

While this girl had applied for a large number of jobs, she was only successful in obtaining interviews in about a quarter of them. In her eyes this was because she was too young, a female, or because employers wanted an experienced person. In the first few interviews she was somewhat nervous but as she confronted more employers she became more relaxed during the selection interviews. She felt that had she been given more interviews for the jobs applied for, her chances of obtaining employment would have been greater, as employers gain only limited knowledge of the person and their capabilities from a letter.

She found it satisfying, organizing and writing letters of application and took care in her personal appearance for interviews, but when the rejections were received, she became dispirited. In the girl's opinion, calling in on firms displayed initiative and courage, but generally, she found this to be an unrewarding experience. It was most disheartening when the reception was blunt, or when employers did not take time to show an interest in her. Anticipation of such responses discouraged her from making future efforts of this nature.

As she applied for an increasing number of jobs, the affective response to the rejections was lessened and her initial hopes of finding employment had given way to pessimism. While she was continuing her search for work she had a major problem to remain confident in spite of being continually rebuffed in the process.

She realized that she was not personally responsible for the situation in which she found herself, and believed that employment was extremely difficult to obtain, even if one had the required motivation and applied the necessary effort. While this awareness helped to anchor her self image, she was frustrated in the sense that her efforts went unrewarded.

Activity during the day was maintained by helping her mother with housework, childcare and shopping. While she had lost contact with the majority of her school friends and missed their company, she was a member of a close-knit, understanding family and their encouragement and support helped to maintain her self-confidence.

In the short term this girl was not concerned about the type of work she might be doing, or the associated monetary rewards, but desired to form a working part of the community, to interact with others and to gain experience. In short, she wanted that which she had been socialized to expect.